Daniel Wildenstein

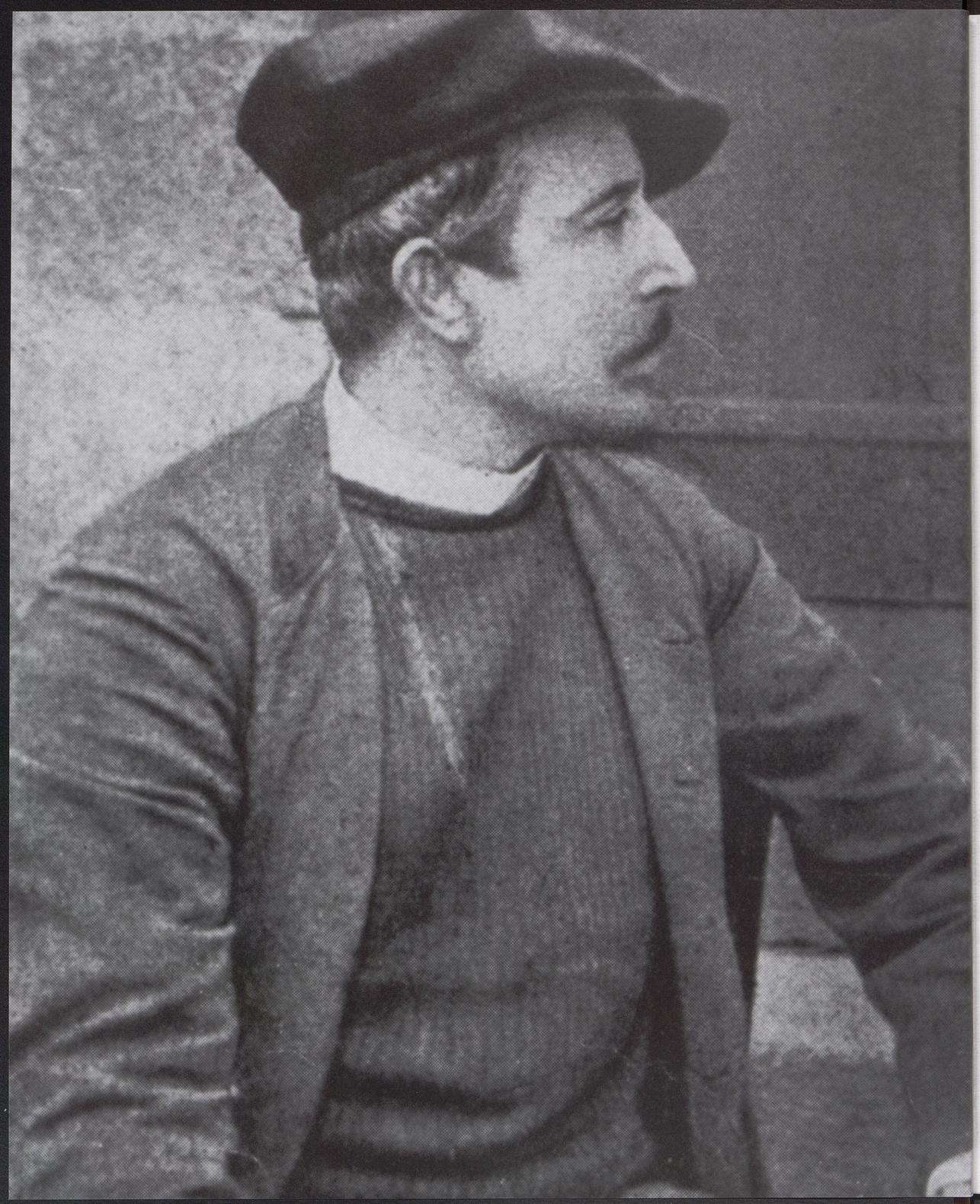
Gauguin

A Savage in the Making
Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings
(1873-1888)

Skira
Wildenstein Institute

A century after the death of Paul Gauguin, our knowledge of his life and work has made huge strides.
The present work covers the youth and early maturity of this pioneering artist and attempts a summation. It also offers a complete catalogue of the paintings, in the process thoroughly updating the original Wildenstein catalogue of 1964. These first two volumes take the reader through to the end of 1888, a year of profound upheaval in French painting. That was the year in which Gauguin and his friends, by a collaborative effort, arrived at Synthetism, and, by rejecting representation in depth, freed Western painting of laws that had governed it since the Renaissance.
But Synthetism was also a form of primitivism. The society in which Gauguin lived was – already – a technical and materialist one, which contained the seeds of all that the 20th century became. Gauguin was one of the first to seek, in reaction to this civilisation, a form of inspiration deriving from the timeless origins of humanity.
Although these two volumes are the product of rigorous research, they are studded with illustrations and are by no means intended for specialists alone. Commentary on each work offers a step-by-step analysis of Gauguin's artistic development, while reconstructing the artist's experience and the aesthetic and socio-cultural issues of his times.
The lively detail of the chronology describes the events of Gauguin's life, along with those of his friends; thanks to extensive research in unpublished archives, it also casts completely new light on Gauguin's ancestry.
The introduction offers an analysis of the period and an in-depth portrait of this great artist.
This exhaustive work is carefully designed so that each entry and inset can be read in isolation, though a system of cross-referencing ensures the continuity of the work and restores the overall trajectory of Gauguin's development.

Paul Gauguin
(1848-1903)



DANIEL WILDENSTEIN

Gauguin

A Savage in the Making

Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings (1873-1888)

Volume II

Text and Research
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Documentation and Chronology
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Abbreviations

Various abbreviations:
A.I.v.G.: Archives Internationales de Van Gogh
BNF: Bibliothèque nationale de France
RMN: Réunion des musées nationaux
GBA: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*
In the text of an entry, **D** refers to *Documents and bibliography*, **E** to *Exhibitions*, and **P** to *Provenance*. References not including these letters direct the reader to the commentary.
c. [circa]: followed by a date means 'around'. However, in *Provenance*, it indicates the first date at which a work is known to have belonged to a collection, where the date of acquisition is unknown.
* is used to indicate an error or anomaly in an original document, e.g. a spelling mistake.
Gauguin's works are referred to by italicised titles and numbers, works in the Wildenstein catalogue of 1964 by the title, W and number.
/ within a signature indicates a new line

Abbreviations concerning EXHIBITIONS:
Exhibitions cited without title are solo *Gauguin* exhibitions.
Certain exhibitions that have toured three or more cities have had their titles abbreviated:
Oslo, Stockholm, and Copenhagen, 1926:
Paul Gauguin, His works in Scandinavian Collections, Oslo, Nasjonalgalleriet, March; Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, April; Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, April-May 1926.
Tokyo, Kyoto, and Fukuoka, 1969:
Paul Gauguin, Tokyo, Seibu Department Store, 23 August-30 September; Kyoto, National Museum of Modern Art, 5 October-7 November; Fukuoka, Prefectural Cultural Centre, 13 November-7 December 1969.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989:
Gauguin, Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1 May-31 July 1988; Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, 17 September-11 December 1988; Paris, galeries nationales du Grand Palais, 10 January-24 April 1989.
Gauguin et les peintres de la Bretagne, Japan, 1992:
Kyoto, The Museum of Kyoto, 14 February-8 March; Saga, Saga Prefectural Art Museum, 13 March-5 April; Kurashiki, Kurashiki Art Museum, 10 April-5 May; Yamagata, Yamagata Museum of Art, 9 May-7 June; Gifu, The Museum of Fine Arts, 10 June-5 July 1992.
Gauguin and the School of Pont-Aven, United States, 1994-1995:
Indianapolis (Indiana), Indianopolis Museum of Art, 27 August-23 October 1994; Baltimore (Maryland), The Walters Art Gallery, 20 November 1994-15 January 1995; Montreal (Quebec), The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 9 February-9 April 1995; Memphis (Tennessee), The Dixon Gallery and Gardens, 7 May-2 July 1995; San Diego (California), San Diego Museum of Art, 29 July-24 September 1995.

Abbreviations for LETTERS and DOCUMENTS:
Published letters are cited in the form 'name of the editor, number or reference of the letter'. The full titles of these publications are given in the SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY.

They are abbreviated as follows:
Bailly-Herzberg
Cooper GAC or VG/PG
Joly-Segalen
Malingue
Merlhès [1984]
For Van Gogh's correspondence, only the number of the letter is cited, following G. Charensol's edition: *Correspondance complète de Vincent Van Gogh*.

Abbreviations concerning WORKS OF ART:
Where there is a catalogue raisonné of an artist's works, the individual work is cited as 'catalogue author, number of work'. Full titles can be found in the SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY.
Émile Bernard: LUTHI
Gustave Caillebotte: BERHAUT
Mary Cassatt: BREESKIN
Paul Cézanne: VENTURI or REWALD
Gustave Courbet: FERNIER
Edgar Degas: LEMOISNE
Eugène Delacroix: ROBAUT
Paul Gauguin: WILDENSTEIN (1964 edition, reduced to: W);
FIELD (monotypes); GRAY (sculpture and ceramics); GUÉRIN (engravings)
Armand Guillaumin: SERRET-FABIANI
Édouard Manet: ROUART-WILDENSTEIN
Manet's engravings: GUÉRIN-Manet
Claude Monet: D. WILDENSTEIN
Camille Pissarro: PISSARRO-VENTURI
Claude-Émile Schuffenecker: GROSSVOGEL
Paul Sérusier: GUICHETEAU
Georges Seurat: HAUKE
Vincent Van Gogh: LA FAILLE (reduced to: F) or HULSKER

The titles of certain works have been given in slightly abbreviated form. For full titles, see SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Abbreviations specific to the CHRONOLOGY are given on the introductory page of that section.

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The Winter in Paris (October 1886-April 1887)

On his return to Paris on 14 October 1886, Gauguin took up residence in a 'little hovel' that Schuffenecker had found him. It was part of an old one-storey apartment block, at 257 rue Lecourbe. These insalubrious premises – 'the walls are running with water and I'm beginning to get pain in my shoulders[1]' Gauguin reported in the new year – had one advantage; they were less than five minutes from Chaplet's studio on rue Blomet. Gauguin, who had been introduced to the potter Chaplet in June (see the view of *Sèvres, 214*, inset), set to work 'like a galley-slave' at what was, for him, a new discipline[2].

His obsession with pottery no doubt accounts for the paucity of his production that winter, especially when we add that he was penniless and suffered a lengthy illness: he spent twenty-seven days in hospital in November-December 1886[3]. He left Paris again in April 1887.

No 'studies' are known to have survived from this period; Gauguin seems to have given up painting from nature. But since the previous summer, his chief interest had been compositions (see introduction to the first Pont-Aven campaign), and he continued to work on these. The four paintings that can be traced to this winter are all relatively complex and ambitious works, and one of them, *Breton Women Chatting (237)* is the first instance of a formula essential to his future *œuvre*. Something about the early 1880s seems to have been conducive to a return to large-scale figure-painting; one thinks of certain Pissarros and Renoirs, or of Seurat and his very modern *Grande Jatte*. Gauguin had been reticent about the trend and even warned Pissarro off figure-painting (see *Peonies, 145*); he was, it seems, still unready to take it up, despite the magisterial example that Degas had long been setting.

But something had changed. It is clear that these firmly drawn monumental figures are in direct line of descent from Degas. *Still Life with Laval's Profile (238)* and *Two Women Bathing (241)* are further proofs of the inspiration that Gauguin drew from Degas that winter. Their personal relations had been rather touchy, especially while Gauguin was staying in Dieppe, but were now again on a firm footing. 'Gauguin is once again bosom friends with Degas and often goes to see him', Pissarro observed that autumn[4].

Then, in *Two Women Bathing (241)* of 1887, Gauguin's need to articulate his thoughts comes suddenly to the fore.

[1] Gauguin to Mette, February 1887 (Merlhès 120).
[2] Gauguin to Bracquemond, c. October-November 1886 (Merlhès 114).
[3] Gauguin to Mette, 26 December 1886 (Merlhès 115).
[4] Camille to Lucien Pissarro, 3rd week of November 1886 (Merlhès XXXI).

◀ *Still Life with Laval's Profile (238)*, detail.



237

237
Breton Women Chatting

Canvas. 0.72 × 0.91
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 86
W201

Perhaps because observation of the landscape plays no role in it, this composition is generally thought to have been painted in the studio after Gauguin's return to Paris around mid-October 1886 and using drawings brought back from Pont-Aven. There is no conclusive proof of this but it seems very likely. Gauguin, at the end of his stay, noted the large number of 'studies' he had made from nature. Now he aspired to 'compositions' (see introductions to the Pont-Aven stay and to this period), and had already produced one very much out of the Pissarro stable: *Breton Shepherdess (233).*

Pissarro's influence is also felt in this work. Jirat-Wasiutynski[1] notes reminiscences of two Pissarro works that belonged to Gauguin. They are *Peasant Women Chatting* (Pissarro-Venturi 530), whose subject is similar, and *Peasant Warming Herself* (Pissarro-Venturi 619), which features a large rustic figure wearing a striped dress.



Back view of a Breton woman and faces, sketches. Gauguin's sketchbook, p. 55. Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art.



C. Pissarro: *Peasant Women Warming Herself* (Pissarro-Venturi 619). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



C. Pissarro: *Peasant Women Chatting* (Pissarro-Venturi 530). Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

But the monumentality of the figures in this work makes it clear that Degas' influence has supplanted Pissarro's. In particular, the posture and physicality of the central figure is immediately reminiscent of certain Degas women seen from the back with their hands on their hips; one such can be seen in *At the Couturières* (Lemoisne 684). At this point, moreover, Gauguin was fully reconciled with Degas (see introduction to this period).
This is, at all events (with the exception of *Woman Sewing, 64,* of 1880), Gauguin's first composition comprising large, carefully-drawn figures. It is a formula that he regularly returned to.

Breton women posing ■ The 1884-1886 sketchbook[2] contains some perfunctory drawings of scenes that may have inspired



E. Degas: *At the Couturière's,* c. 1882 (Lemoisne 684). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

this picture: a posture here, some faces in conversation there. But the backbone of the composition was a series of large preparatory pastel and charcoal drawings. These are unusual both in their size and their meticulous execution. The figures in these drawings are the same size as in the canvas and they occasionally recur in later works. It may be that this important step was encouraged by the ease with which one could, at Pont-Aven, find models willing to pose for little or nothing (see the introduction to Gauguin's first Brittany campaign).

Louise? ■ While the pastel of the left-hand Breton woman was in Vollard's hands, it was accompanied by a piece of information that casts some light on the identity of the model; it was said to be a *Portrait of Louise, landlady of the inn at Pont-Aven.* This cannot be the landlady of the *pension Gloanec*, Marie-Jeanne, who resembled the subject in neither appearance nor name. Nor can it be the cook, Louise Cotonnec, thirty-six years old, and from 'inland Brittany', as her distinctive *coiffe* indicates in the many contemporary photos. It must therefore be a servant girl known to us only by her Christian name. Thuars [Pierre Tuarze?] tells



Three-Quarter Right View of Breton Woman, drawing. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Three-Quarter Left View of Breton Woman, drawing. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Breton Woman in Left Profile, charcoal. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Back View of a Breton Woman, drawing. Glasgow, Art Gallery and Museum, The Burrell Collection.

Geese

Ducks and geese, though less elegant than the soaring birds featured in earlier paintings (see *To Make a Bouquet, 62*, inset), now and for a long time to come appear more frequently than any other winged creatures. They are the effective subjects of *Goose Games (274)* and *Breton Woman and Goose (307)* of 1888.
Gauguin's sketches capture them in the most varied positions, though certain of them, reappearing in the decoration of ceramics and furniture, eventually become something of a shorthand for primitive Breton rusticity.
Certain positions, such as wings spread for take-off, or walking in one direction with neck craning behind, make early appearances in the ceramics, and, particularly after 1889, tend to acquire an emblematic value.

us: 'old Louise, who died a few years ago, had also been a serving woman at the pension Gloanec. She had received a handsome painting from Gauguin, but there was a terrible mistake in it: Gauguin had depicted a washerwoman by the river in a red robe, and red robes were, it seems, worn only for great occasions […] She put up with the mistake for a few years but [eventually] resigned herself to throwing it out with the rubbish[3]'.



R. Caldecott: Illustration for 'The House that Jack Built' from *R. Caldecott's First Collection of Pictures and Songs*, London, no date. Photo: BNF.

The truth of this anecdote is uncertain, but it does suggest that there was indeed a serving woman called Louise, and further suggests that there was a colour picture of her. It is not unlike another story recounted much later by Maurice: one of the serving women of the pension Gloanec received, 'in return for certain happy hours […] four pictures by the master [Gauguin]. An art lover, Monsieur Jean le Corronc […] went to find this [girl]friend of Gauguin's [. She] had since grown very old, and was living in wretched poverty. She naively admitted that she no longer possessed these works, since, long ago, unaware of their value, she had used them as doormats…[4]'. There is, of course, no proof that this was the same *servante*, nor any evidence as to date; but the similarity of these two anecdotes seems at least to show that Gauguin sometimes bestowed small works on local serving-women, one of whom might be the said Louise, and perhaps therefore the model for the left-hand *Bretonne* in this picture.

Marie? ■ The right-hand figure would seem to be 'Marie Louarde'. Such, at least, is the inscription on the back of a watercolour of this figure apparently copied from the present work (reproduced opposite *Breton Woman, 267*). In a 1944 sale catalogue, the watercolour appeared under the designation 'Marie Louarn'. This, in turn, would seem to be Marie Lourin (or Louarn?) much appreciated by Gauguin because she was willing to pose in the nude; she is in all probability the model for one of the two figures in *Two Women Bathing (241)* and for the little portrait *293* (q.v.). The prominent forehead and perfunctory *coiffe* of this remarkable woman are clearly rendered in the preparatory charcoal drawing for the right-hand figure.

Birds ■ That summer, Hartrick tells us, Gauguin was full of admiration for the ingenious drawings of geese in Caldecott's albums[5]. He had himself executed a whole series of sketches from nature in his 1884-1886 sketchbook[6], and here borrowed from page 41 the little geese that form miniature echoes of the *coiffes*. (Hereafter,



Geese, sketch. Gauguin's sketchbook, p. 41, detail. Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art.

geese frequently recur in Gauguin's work: see inset.) This is one of the first of Gauguin's collocations of women and animals. It is, perhaps, slightly less innocent than *Breton Shepherdess (233)*; such collocations soon acquired their own significance (see, for example, *Two Women Bathing, 241*).

Experimentation ■ A number of unexpected effects make this composition an experimental work and one of the most anti-natural that Gauguin had yet produced. One such is the out-of-centre composition, which congests the animated areas of the canvas, raises the furthest *Bretonne* to an incongruous height, and places centre-stage the all but blank spaces of a wall and a woman's back.
Another is the intensely vertical space, like that of *Bathing Place, Pont-Aven Port (223)*; back and wall combine to counteract any real sense of depth. This effect was clearly intended; as Jirat-Wasiutynski and Newton have demonstrated[7], Gauguin painted over a shrub that would have hidden the central skirt. An X-ray reveals both the *pentimento* and the rejected foreground effect.
Another is the play made with the white *coiffes*; the right-hand figure sports headgear much more elaborate than the neglected bonnet recorded in his charcoal drawing. There are also certain eccentricities in the composition, such as the enormous sleeve of the left-hand figure (taken directly from

Artistic Distortion

The anatomical exaggerations of *Woman Sewing (64)* are naturalistic in spirit. But Gauguin had always admired the elegance and audacity of drawings by old and indeed more recent masters. He often talked about this, citing Ingres, Degas, Delacroix,



E. Delacroix: *The Death of Sardanapalus* (Robaut 198), detail. Paris, Musée du Louvre. Photo: RMN.



E. Degas: *Dancer Posing at a Photographer's Studio* (Lemoisne 447), Moscow, Pushkin Museum.

Velazquez, Cranach, Botticelli and others. Thus in 1885 he observed that 'in Delacroix the arms and shoulders twist back on themselves in mad and impossible fashion, yet they express the reality of passion[1]'.
And towards the end of his life, in *Diverses choses*[2], he justifies what he terms 'revolts in drawing', explaining that the 'profile with full-face eye' in Delacroix's *Massacre at Chios* offered an equivalent of reality and was, as such, perfectly satisfying; 'one must address the mind, and equivalents suffice for that'. In 1886, Bernard tells us, Gauguin 'spoke above all of Degas, having the greatest respect for the aesthetic distortions in his work[3]'.
In his own work, these distortions remained, for all their power of suggestion, realistic; but two years later, they inclined suddenly toward a quite different system. In this, their function was to express a subjective vision: see *Wrestlers (298)* and *The Vision (308)*, inset on Synthetism.

[1] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 25 May 1885 (Merlhès 78).
[2] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, pp. 221-222.
[3] É. Bernard: 'Concernant Paul Gauguin', *Nouvelle revue d'Égypte*, January 1904, p. 8.

his pastel) and the 'artistically' distorted pose of the right-hand figure, of a kind that Gauguin admired in masters like Degas and Delacroix (see inset)..
Finally, there is the overtly strange treatment that Gauguin gave this theme. The work is recorded in his 1888-1890 sketchbook as *Breton Women Chatting*[8], and we have retained that title. But neither the women's stances nor their facial expressions convince us that Gauguin sought to give a realistic depiction of this everyday scene of conversation. Instead, we are offered a glimpse into a female world, in which the central figure, planted firmly on her feet, arms akimbo, is contrasted with the other three, in whom, eyes lowered, she finds a more fluid and dreamy echo of herself. It is as if the movement suggested by the preparatory charcoal of the right-hand *bretonne* – a more *bravura* piece than the three other studies – had somehow communicated itself to the others.
The picture is divided into zones delimited by a faint outline – generated by the transfer of the drawings to the canvas – each of which receives its own treatment. And the juxtaposition of styles that Gauguin had used, for example in *Field (226)*, is now more carefully structured, and borders on decorative patterning. The result is distantly reminiscent of Japanese prints.

The little peasant in the background (who may himself have figured in a sketch now lost), along with certain of the *bretonnes* and geese, were borrowed – in different contexts and positions – for a number of ceramic works (Gray 18, 41, 45), the watercolour cited above (bearing the inscription 'Marie Louarde'), a fan (W202), a zincograph (Guérin 4), and two paintings of 1888 (*Breton Woman with Pitcher, 267*, and *Autumn at Pont-Aven, 313*). This work was therefore an important step in Gauguin's accumulation of a repertory of forms: see *Breton Shepherdess, 233*, inset.

[1] Jirat-Wasiutynski, 1975, p. 113 (**D**)
[2] Gauguin's sketchbook, 1884-1886 (Cogniat-Rewald, 1962), p. 55.
[3] P. Thuars [Pierre Tuarze?]: 'L'Étonnante aventure de l'École de Pont-Aven', *Le Progrès de Cornouaille*, 30 November 1957, p. 3.
[4] R. Maurice: 'En guise de préface', introduction to É. Bernard: 'Souvenirs inédits sur l'artiste peintre Paul Gauguin…', Lorient, no date [1939], p. 7.
[5] A.S. Hartrick: *A Painter's Pilgrimage through Fifty Years*, Cambridge, 1939, p. 33.
[6] Gauguin's sketchbook, 1884-1886 (Cogniat-Rewald, 1962).
[7] Jirat-Wasiutynski and Newton, 1991, p. 65 (**D**).
[8] Huyghe, 1952, p. 225 (**D**).

Documents and bibliography:

Boussod et Valadon stock book (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and the Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, pp. 94-95): '[no.] 19509 Breton women [bought:] 22.10.88 APN [FF 510] [sold:] UNX [FF 600 by the shop on the] Boulevard to Dupuis [bought by] Boulevard from the artist 22.10.88': the simultaneity of purchase and sale indicates that the work was on deposit for sale.
Theo to Vincent Van Gogh, 23 October 1888 (T2): 'I've sold the big Gauguin painting, the Breton women that was on deposit at Diot's. I've sent him 500 frs for that – so he'll be in funds for the moment – but will he come and join you!'
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 24 or 25 October 1888 (557): Gauguin having just arrived in Arles 'is of course delighted by the sale you've made and I am too because in this way certain expenses still absolutely necessary for the place here need not either wait or fall on you alone'.
Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 25 October 1888, in V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, pp. 124-127: 'I'm glad to be rid of the Gloanec debt which will shortly be paid with the picture of Breton women that you know (sold 500 f) the one that Quignon wanted for 100 f'. Fernand Just Quignon (see *White Tablecloth, 217*) was born in 1854. One of the two collaborators on the pension Gloanec inn-sign, he had been a Pont-Aven 'regular' for several years. He was also Schuffenecker's neighbour in rue Boulard until 1888 (see introduction to the winter of 1887-1888). Later, as 'the harvest painter', he received several medals, painting his landscapes in the studio following academic methods that dis-

couraged the young Loiseau (C.-G. Le Paul: *L'Impressionnisme dans l'École de Pont-Aven*, Lausanne and Paris, 1983, pp. 178-179, and 195).
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 225: '[sold to] Dupuis Breton women chatting [FF] 500'
Vollard Archives, 1908 diary, 22 May: 'Paid to Baudouin [auctioneer at the Gerbeau sale] […] 1 Gauguin from the Gerbeau sale'.
R. Meyer-Riefstahl: 'Über Paul Gauguin (Gelegentlich der Ausstellung in der modernen Galerie)', *Münchner Neuesten Nachrichten*, 25 August 1901 (in P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven* […], Sigmaringen, 1997, pp. 45, 93, note 143): cites the *Groupe de Bretons* [sic] exhibited at Thannhauser as among the most beautiful.
R.S. [Richard Stiller]: 'Die Ausstellung von Paul Gauguin bei Arnold', *Dresdner Anzeiger*, 16 September 1910, p. 2: 'the calm surfaces of the group of four Breton women exhibit broad volumes and well balanced forms, along with an elegant treatment of certain details and of the overall tonality' (German original).
P. Fechter: 'Paul Gauguin. Zur Ausstellung in der Galerie Arnold', *Dresdner Neusten Nachrichten*, 23 September 1910: 'The prudent and almost conventional *Group of Breton Women* is dated 1886' (German original).
P.F. [Fechter]: 'Ausstellungen. Dresden', *Kunst und Künstler*, 1 October 1910, pp. 102 (repr., with the information: exhibited at the Arnold gallery), 107 (in Kropmanns, 1997, above, pp. 46, 93, note 146): as preceding article.
M. Bodelsen: 'The Missing Link in Gauguin's Cloisonism', *GBA*, May-June 1959, pp. 333-339 (repr.)
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 201 (repr.).
M. Bodelsen: *Gauguin's Ceramics*, London, 1964, pp. 21 (fig. 9), 23-27 (fig. 11), 30, 38-39, 43 (fig. 35), 51 (fig. 40f), 52 (fig. 41) reproduces many ceramics and drawings relating to the motifs of this painting.
J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and the Impressionists', *GBA*, January-February 1973, pp. 31, 74-75, 90, 94-95.
V. Jirat-Wasiutynski: *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1975), microfilm version, 1993, pp. 108, 111-117, 192, 222, 251, 276.
V. Jirat-Wasiutynski and T. Newton: 'Tradition and innovation […]', *Actes du colloque Gauguin* […] *1989*, Paris, 1991, pp. 63, 64 (X-ray of the painting repr.), 65, 70 (detail, repr.).

Exhibitions:
Munich, Moderne Galerie [Thannhauser], August 1910, no. 9: *Group of Breton Men* (the catalogue is in French; almost all the works were lent by Vollard).
Dresden, galerie Arnold, September-October 1910, no. 6: *Group of Breton Women* (almost all the works were lent by Vollard).
Manet and the Post-Impressionists, London, Grafton Galleries, November 1910-January 1911, no. 126: *Group of Breton Women*, belonging to Vollard.
Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-1950, no. 17.
Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1960, no. 28.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1966, ex-catalogue.
Post-Impressionism, London, Royal Academy of Arts, 1979-1980, no. 2.

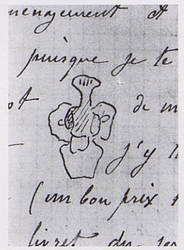
Provenance:
On deposit for sale with Boussod et Valadon, Paris, c. 1888 – sold at the end of the Gauguin's Pont-Aven stay, this painting had been deposited with Boussod prior to Gauguin's departure in February 1888.
At some point, deposited either by Boussod or by Gauguin (before he deposited it with Boussod) with Diot (Modern Paintings and Frames, 34 rue Laffitte); see Theo Van Gogh's letter, 23 October 1888, **D** above.
Bought from Boussod by Dupuis on 22 October 1888 for FF 600 (see Boussod stock book, **D** above). May have been sold on by the industrialist shortly before his suicide in December 1890, to the dealer Salvador Meyer (cf. *Bathing Place, 221*, **P**).
Jules Gerbeau sale, Paris, Drouot, 18 May 1908, no. 15 (to Vollard).
Vollard (still in 1910).
Private collection, Germany.
Emy Roth, Zurich.
Donated by Emy Roth i.m. Hugo von Tschudi in 1913 to the Bavarian museums:
Munich, Neue Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen – 8701.

238
Still Life with Laval's Profile

Canvas. 0.46 × 0.38
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 86
W207

Like *Breton Women Chatting (237)*, this is another studio composition, painted at a time when Gauguin was increasingly drawn to this kind of work. It marks a return to the hybrid still-life-and-portrait formula which had interested Gauguin since *Interior (77)* of 1881, and whose culminating achievement till now had been the portrait of *Clovis (151)* painted in 1884 (on these composite formulas, see *Interior, 76*).

Winter creation ■ The painting can be dated to late 1886, when Gauguin was in



Sketch of a pot, in Gauguin's letter to Mette, 6 December 1887 (Merlhès 137). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Paris, since the principal object in the arrangement is one of Gauguin's ceramic works (Gray 9). Though this pot has since disappeared, it is fully attested, and undoubtedly dates from this winter period. Far too elaborate to be the product of experiments undertaken before Gauguin left for Brittany in mid-July, the pot is certainly a product of his creative fervour of the autumn and winter. Chaplet was firing a large number of works at his studio late in the year, and '55 pieces in good condition', which Gauguin called 'products of my wild folly', emerged from it. 'You'll shriek when you see these monstrosities', he told Bracquemond, 'but I'm convinced you'll find them interesting[1]', though to Mette he confided that they were 'probably too artistic to sell[2]'. The very inventive pot that appears here was, we know, made during this 1886 campaign; indeed, it seems to have been one of the pieces that Gauguin deemed most satisfactory, since, having chosen it for this composition, he further mentioned it a year later in a letter to Mette which he decorated with a little drawing of it. 'Have you also taken a pot that I made: take good care of it for me, I value it, unless you find an opportunity to sell it (a good price 100 f)[3]'. So it seems clear that Gauguin worked on the present painting in his 'little hovel' on rue Lecourbe, the insalubrious studio where, that December, he fell seriously ill (see introduction to this period).
Laval's profile was no doubt based on a drawing, which could have been made in Pont-Aven in the summer (where the two men met) or in Paris after mid-October. We know of only one sketch showing Laval from a similar angle, but there is no indication that it was re-used for this painting;



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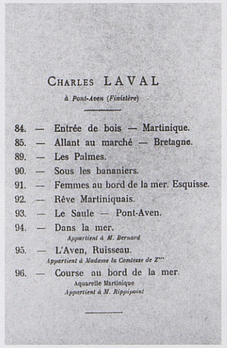
Charles Laval. Musée de Pont-Aven.

Laval

'Very tall, hollow featured, and exquisitely courteous (he was extremely well-bred)[1]', Laval was one of the most sympathetic characters in Gauguin's entourage; a man of good heart and genuine artistic temperament, despite certain notorious weaknesses.

Generosity and fragile health ■ 'Laval was a very intelligent man, but of very delicate health', Delavallée tell us[2]; he must already have been ill when Gauguin met him, since just before he left France with Gauguin, he sought to reassure Puigaudeau: 'nothing could be worse for me than Paris […] I've spent the winter freezing and eating just enough to stay alive. If my health has survived this long spell of cold, it can only improve in a warm climate[3]'. The voyage sealed their friendship. 'I saved Laval from suicide[4]', Gauguin later recorded: this presumably refers to an incident when Laval had attempted his own life in an attack of delirium brought on by fever[5].
After Gauguin had left Martinique, Laval, who stayed on, set down his feelings, pure and unrestrained: 'When I read your letter, I wept like a child. Your penury will always be mine for you shared it with me. Everyone injures you and you remain kind, calm and loyal; I know this because I myself have hurt you […] you are an example and I shall follow you with all my might […] I'm working but not enough. Yet I feel I'm making great progress. You rolled back my horizons and made space around me […] I want to succeed in order to prove that you've done nothing but good. […] the longer I live the more I admire your talent and the more respect and affection I feel for you. You made me understand what superiority is and this helps me as I endeavour to rise[6]'.

Yet Laval worked very little; he was no doubt impeded by his precarious health and worries about money. It may also be that his 'rather dissolute life' weighed heavily on such an exacting character; 'not only was he very lazy, he was always out of sorts with himself', as Bernard noted[7]. Gauguin refused to dwell on these weaknesses. 'Be a good friend to Laval', he counselled Bernard in 1888, 'he's a fine and noble character despite his glaring faults – when the brute will out… you know there's one in all of us; you have some terrible vices too. We have to put up with them and still somehow support one another[8]'. Laval was less forgiving of his failings. There was a strain of naïve generosity toward Bernard when Laval told him, in 1890: 'Your life is clean, I can't say the same of mine'. He went on: 'I've led a detestable life and am profoundly upset when I realise that I've never acted as I should – yet I feel I have more steadfast purpose than ever (not difficult) and hope I can redeem my stupid past life if only a little[9]'. He did indeed manage to show ten works at the Volpini exhibition in 1889 (around half as many as Gauguin, Bernard and Schuffenecker, though this was more than Anquetin or Roy). But thereafter he seems to have found work increasingly difficult. 'Laval doubts and dozes', Bernard observed in August[10], and during the autumn Gauguin confirmed 'in six months in Brittany he hasn't put brush to canvas[11]'. Then: 'No news from Laval. I'm seriously worried that the poor fellow is training himself up not to work, even if you think you're impotent, there is such a thing as duty[12]'.



CHARLES LAVAL

à Pont-Aven (Finistère)

84. — Entrée de bois — Martinique.
85. — Allant au marché — Bretagne.
89. — Les Palmes.
90. — Sous les bananiers.
91. — Femmes au bord de la mer. Esquisse.
92. — Rêve Martiniquais.
93. — Le Saule — Pont-Aven.
94. — Dans la mer.
Appartient à M. Bernard.
95. — L'Aven, Ruisseau.
Appartient à Madame la Comtesse de Z…
96. — Course au bord de la mer.
Aquarelle Martinique
Appartient à M. Rippoponi



Catalogue
de
L'Exposition de Peintures
du Groupe Impressionniste & Synthétiste
AU CAFÉ VOLPINI
1889

Catalogue of the Volpini exhibition (1889). Cover and Laval's exhibits. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

The rival ■ Then, suddenly, in May 1890, Gauguin is accusing Laval of ingratitude, and deliberately leaving him out of a planned trip to Madagascar. Gauguin's letter to Bernard shows fierce resentment, and it cannot be attributed merely to Laval's exasperating indolence[13]. The trigger was something else: in April 1890, Laval became engaged to Madeleine Bernard.
Madeleine was a charismatic young woman, and when, joining her brother Émile, she first appeared at the pension Gloanec in 1888, both Gauguin and Laval were thoroughly smitten (see the portrait of *Madeleine, 305*). But Gauguin quickly gave up any hope of her, partly out of respect for her age (she was only seventeen), and partly because he deemed himself too dedicated to his art and perhaps too old (he had just turned forty). He may therefore have expected Laval to make a similar renunciation; Laval's future prospects were no better than his, and though only ten years older than Madeleine, Laval was of unsound health.
Relations were not completely broken off – in October 1890, Laval was trying to sell a picture for Gauguin – but their friendship was a thing of the past. Thereafter, Gauguin's only references to Laval were contemptuous: 'That idiot Laval […] He's making no progress in illustrations, he says, and everything he does is a failure! Well, he hasn't deserved much better anyway…[14]'.

No future in the relationship ■ The Bernard family was not best pleased by this engagement. 'I had a great struggle on my hands, I had Father's opinions to contend with and Mother's too, a bit', Madeleine told Émile in spring 1890[15]. Émile was not overjoyed himself: 'I confess that though I think Laval is intelligent and good-natured, I have no respect for his capacity to work', he told his mother, 'He is talented, and refuses to make the most of it. And I don't have much confidence in the constancy of his affections either […] I may be wrong, but Nino [Laval's elder brother, a writer] would have suited me better where marriage is concerned. If I have one piece of advice for Charles [Laval], it is never to marry […] Nothing can cause him more suffering than marriage[16]'. Madeleine tried hard to convince her brother; she felt sure that 'if you saw the change in your friend, you'd stop thinking the things his past conduct entitles you to think[17]'. Émile was partly won over but tuberculosis had been diagnosed and this in itself made Laval a bad prospect: 'I couldn't overlook the dangers that my sister ran in his company', Émile wrote: 'Alas! She later suffered the fate I feared[18]'.
The engagement never came to anything. 'Laval, who entertained the noblest feelings for her, never managed to marry her, since he never managed to earn his living. His lungs were very bad and, afflicted by worries, he grew thinner and thinner[19]'. But it should be said that Madeleine too had her part in this outcome since she was neither ready for marriage nor in love with Laval (see her portrait, *305*, inset 'Madeleine').



É. Bernard : *Portrait de Madeleine Bernard*, 1889 (Luthi 201). Photo Sotheby's.

A life lost to view ■ After 1890, we lose sight of Laval. He is absent from Gauguin's letters and, presumably because he had produced so little, took no part in the group activities at Le Barc's gallery in the early 1890s. We next meet him on his deathbed in Saint-Joseph hospital; he died on 26 April 1894 aged thirty-three. His brother Nino must have been away since his death was declared by two clerks.
Perhaps his simple-hearted good nature reconciled him to his failures of the previous few years; let us hope so. As to his work, Gauguin deemed him a 'personal artist[20]'; his œuvre is sparse and very different from Gauguin's despite what Bernard had to say. What happened to it, we do not know: Malingue tells us that Laval bequeathed all his worldly goods to his mother. According to Bernard, his work was auctioned off by Nino[21].
Gauguin gave Laval this portrait, the 1888 *Self-Portrait* (W297), and a sketchbook[22] records that Laval bought one of Gauguin's pots for FF 15. Laval also possessed a drawing of a Breton woman, dedicated to him by Gauguin in 1886[23], and the symbolic 'still life' of 1888 (*312*). He may well have possessed other works, succinctly registered in Gauguin's 1888-1890 sketchbook (**D**) as 'etc'..



C. Laval: *Self-Portrait*, 1888. Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).

[1] É. Bernard: *L'Aventure de ma vie*, manuscript in the collection of the Bibliotheque du Louvre, p. 84.
[2] C. Chassé: *Gauguin en son temps*, Paris, 1955, p. 45.
[3] Laval to Puigaudeau, c. April 1887, in V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, p. 38.
[4] Gauguin to De Monfreid, August 1896 (Joly-Segalen XXIV).
[5] The event is mentioned by J. de Rotonchamp: *Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1906, reprinted 1925, pp. 37-38.
[6] Laval to Gauguin, 9 December 1887, in V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, 1989, pp. 51-54.
[7] É. Bernard: *Souvenirs inédits sur l'artiste peintre Paul Gauguin…*, Lorient, [1939], pp. 14-15.
[8] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, late October-early November 1888 (Merlhès 176).
[9] Merlhès, 1984, p. 453 (**D**).
[10] Émile Bernard to Émile Schuffenecker, 26 August 1889, letter in the collection of the Bibliothèque nationale.
[11] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, October 1889 (Malingue LXXXIX).
[12] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, November 1889 (Malingue XCII).
[13] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, May 1890 (Malingue CIII).
[14] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 25 October 1890, in V. Merlhès: *De Bretagne en Polynésie. Paul Gauguin. Pages inédites*, Tahiti, 1995, p. 53.
[15] Letter copied by Émile Bernard in the *Manuscrit Madeleine Bernard*, Bibliothèque du Louvre, pp. 41-42.
[16] Émile Bernard to his mother, April or May 1890, in the collection of the Library of the Pennsylvania State University.
[17] Madeleine to Émile Bernard, spring 1890, *Manuscrit Madeleine Bernard*, pp. 41-42.
[18] Bernard, *L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 87.
[19] Bernard, *L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 84.
[20] Gauguin to Nino Laval, c. 18-22 September 1888 (Merlhès 164).
[21] É. Bernard: *Souvenirs inédits […]*, 1939, pp. 9 and 15.
[22] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), pp. 223 and 226 (**D**).
[23] Now in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.

it was set down on a page from Martinique and might date from 1887 rather than 1886.

Meeting Laval ■ Gauguin made the acquaintance of the painter Charles Laval at Pont-Aven, and they soon became friends. Laval was born on 17 March 1861 at 65 rue Blanche. He was of 'mixed Burgundian and Slavic blood', as Merlhès tells us in what is the most complete and fully-researched account of the man[4]. Charles was the second son of Eugène Laval (1818-1869), an architect who had trained in Labrouste's studio and had a very active career, working in particular with the Administration des Monuments historiques and the Commission des bâtiments des lycées. In 1859, Eugène married an orphan born in a recently Russified territory of Poland. Her name was Marcienne Émilie Lewkowicz, and she was eighteen years younger than her husband. Their first son was born that same year: Léonard Félix Eugène, known as Nino. Eugène Laval seems to have been highly intelligent, solving the most complex architectural problems concisely and efficiently. He also seems to have been a man of exceptional warmth and generosity, who, despite a long illness to which he eventually succumbed, remained 'kind and helpful' to the last, and vested 'prodigious energy' in his work and family[5]. Little is known of Marcienne, who was now solely responsible for two children aged eight and ten respectively.

Charles Laval was clearly a chip off the old block. He took an early interest in painting and was accepted for the Salon in 1880, aged only eighteen. His artistic sensitivity took him from the academic Bonnat studio to the less rigid one of Cormon, and he made friends with Gauguin as soon as they met. The meeting – at the pension Gloanec – transformed Laval's life and art. He was then twenty-five and painted in fairly traditional fashion. Bernard remembered him as having painted 'some fine portraits in the dark manner[6]'; Delavallée remembers a style 'like that of Degas[7]'. Gauguin was thirteen years older, and, in

adopting Gauguin as his master, Laval adopted Impressionism.
That summer, then, Gauguin had his first followers, the tall, skinny Laval and the young Puigaudeau, generally dubbed 'Picolo'. The role of mentor suited Gauguin down to the ground, and he was soon close friends with Laval. After his return to Paris in the autumn, it soon occurred to Gauguin to put Laval up in his rue Lecourbe studio (Laval was then living at 150 bis boulevard Pereire): 'I'm expecting him to come and live in my studio any day now. He no longer has any work there, so his rent is money down the drain. Best combine our two penuries, it'll be more fun[8]'.
For some years, Laval, in Bernard's words, 'never left Gauguin's side[9]'. Chamaillard confirms that Laval 'was the only one who loved and followed him passionately[10]'. He went with Gauguin to Panama, then, in 1887, to Martinique, and was party to all his plans for artistic brotherhoods. But their relationship abruptly cooled around 1890 (see inset).

Homages ■ Gauguin had already included works of art in his still lifes (see *Peonies, 145*, inset); here, for the first time, he presents one of his own works. Though the inclusion of this work makes the painting to some degree an artistic manifesto, it is also a homage to two masters: Cézanne and Degas. The general manner of the composition, with its outlined volumes and animated background, testifies to Gauguin's admiration for Cézanne's still lifes (see *Apples, Jug, Iridescent Glass, 144*). And the audacious foreground framing of Laval's profile derives from Degas, who had borrowed the effect principally from Japanese prints. Gauguin was now increasingly close to Degas (see introduction to this period), and seems deliberately to have associated his young colleague and friend Laval with this double homage and manifesto.

[1] Gauguin to Bracquemond, late November or late December 1886-early 1887, Merlhès 116.
[2] Gauguin to Mette, 26 December 1886, Merlhès 115.
[3] Gauguin to Mette, 6 December 1887, Merlhès 137.
[4] Merlhès, 1984, pp. 450-454, note 219 (**D**).
[5] Merlhès, 1984, pp. 450-454, note 219 (**D**).
[6] É. Bernard: *L'Aventure de ma vie*, manuscript in the collection of the Bibliothèque du Louvre, p. 78.
[7] Chassé, 1955, p. 45.
[8] Gauguin to Puigaudeau, 29 January 1887, Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, 1989, pp. 31-32.
[9] É. Bernard: *L'Aventure de ma vie*, above, p. 75.
[10] A. Salmon: 'Chamaillard et le groupe de Pont-Aven', *L'Art vivant*, 1 July 1925, p. 16.

Documents and bibliography:
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 226: 'Laval his Portrait etc… given'.
F.v.O. [Fritz von Ostini]: 'Französische Künstler im Münchner Kunstverein', *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 6 September 1906 (in P. Kropmanns, 1997, below, pp. 33, 87, note 86).
Spectator: 'Frankfurter Kunstschau (Die Franzosen im Kunstverein), *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 16 October 1906 (in Kropmanns, 1997, p. 88, note 88).
P. Fechter: 'Die Impressionisten bei Arnold', *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*, 10 November 1906 (in Kropmanns, 1997, pp. 34, 88, note 90).
H. Dorra: 'Émile Bernard and Paul Gauguin', *GBA*, April 1955, pp. 229, 231 (repr.).
C. Gray: *Sculptures and Ceramics of Paul Gauguin*, Baltimore, 1963, p. 122 (repr.).
M. Bodelsen: *Gauguin's Ceramics*, London, 1964, pp. 154, 155 (fig. 107).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 207 (repr.).
V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, p. 441, *notule* 13 (Merlhès believes that Delavallée, thinking that he remembered a portrait of Puigaudeau is in fact remembering this portrait); pp. 443-447, notes 214 and 215 (on the ceramics); pp. 444, note 1, and 450-454, note 219 (on Laval).
P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven* […], Sigmaringen, 1997, pp. 32-34.

Exhibitions:
Ausstellung Französischer Künstler, Germany, 1906-1907 (Munich, Kunstverein, September 1906; Frankfurt, Kunstverein, October; Dresden, Arnold, November; Karlsruhe, Badischer Kunstverein, December-January; Stuttgart, Württembergisher Kunstverein, January 1907): no. 36 (*Still Life with the Profile of the Painter Laval*, Schuffenecker collection, for sale).
Vienna, Miethke, March-April 1907, no. 70 (*Still Life and Portrait, Pont-Aven*, for sale).
Internationale Kunstausstellung des Sonderbundes…, Cologne, Städtische Ausstellungshalle, 1912, no. 152 (Baron Moritz Leopold Herzog).
Honderd Jaar Fransche Kunst, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, summer 1938, no. 122a (Baron A. Herzog collection).
New York, Wildenstein, 1956, no. 14.
Cincinnati (Ohio), Cincinnati Art Museum, 1971, no. 13.
Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Toronto (Ontario), Art Gallery of Ontario, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, 1981, no. 45.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 30.
Gauguin and the School of Pont-Aven, United States, 1994-1995, no. 34.
Gauguin and the School of Pont-Aven, Künzelsau, Museum Würth, 1997, no. 4.

Provenance:
Given by Gauguin to Charles Laval.
Schuffenecker, c. 1906, see **E** above. A reproduction of this painting forms part of a series of Druet-Vizzavona photographs taken during the first quarter of the 20th century and belonging to Jeanne Schuffenecker. She must have received them from Amédée Schuffenecker, who dealt in Gauguin's works at the beginning of the 20th century (on Amédée, see *Geese in the Meadow, 184*, inset).
Marczell de Nemes, Budapest.
Baron Moritz Leopold Herzog, Budapest, c. 1912.
Baron A.H. Herzog, Budapest, c. 1938.
Mr and Mrs Otto L. Spaeth, New York, c. 1950.
Mrs Walter B. Ford, Grosse Pointe Farms (Michigan), c. 1959.
Mr and Mrs Walter B. Ford II sale, New York, Christie's, 13 May 1980, no. 32 (to Samuel Josefowitz).
Samuel Josefowitz collection.
Entered the Indianapolis Museum in 1998:
Indianapolis (Indiana), Indianapolis Museum of Art, Samuel Josefowitz Collection of the School of Pont-Aven, through the Generosity of Lilly Endowment Inc., The Josefowitz Family, and Other Friends of the Museum – 1998-167.

239
Pots and Bouquets

Canvas. 0.595 × 0.730
Signed and dated lower left:
P. Gauguin 86
W209

This surprising *montage* of still lifes is almost without equivalent in Gauguin's work; the nearest analogy is the combination of landscapes in *Winter (162)*. The flower-filled basket and the drape belong (with certain variations) to a canvas already several years old, *93*. A vase of flowers, faithfully copied from a little oil-sketch (*219*) made at Pont-Aven in early summer 1886, is placed on the drape. Finally, at the right-hand edge of the painting, we recognise one of Gauguin's pots, Gray 10, which cannot be earlier than the winter of 1886-1887. The composition must therefore be placed



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after mid-October 1886, when Gauguin returned to Paris; he would surely not have taken so old a painting as *93* to Pont-Aven. However, the date of the work remains uncertain. The brushwork of the painting clearly befits the winter of 1886-1887 rather than the following one. But the curious pot resembles certain vases of the winter 1887-1888; if we accept this date for the pot, we must consider the possibility that Gauguin added the image of his pot somewhat later, thus filling up a free space in the painting. We have, it is true, no absolute proof that the pot was *not* among those fired the previous winter (1886-1887), and therefore cannot completely exclude this possibility, which is in some ways the simplest solution. And it is just possible, though much less likely, that both canvas and pot belong to the winter of 1887-1888 and that Gauguin erroneously dated the painting 1886.
We conclude, then, that this combination still life was painted in Gauguin's studio in Paris during the winter, winter having for several years now been Gauguin's preferred season for repeats and studio compositions. Probably this was the winter of 1886 when his taste for compositions was intensifying (see *Breton Shepherdess, 233*). He used the painting to record a pot with which he was, presumably, satisfied; he had already done this in 1886 (*Still Life with Laval's Profile, 238*), and a similar function was performed by *Still Life with Fan (259)* of 1887 and *Still Life with Fruit Bowl (263)* of 1888.

Documents and bibliography:
M. Bodelsen: *Gauguin's Ceramics*, London, 1964, pp. 95, 98, 106 (fig. 74), 107 (fig. 75: ceramic Gray 10).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 209 (repr.).
V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, p. 444, note 215 (1).

Exhibitions:
Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-1950, no. 9.
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 30.
Paris, Charpentier, 1960, no. 24 bis.

Provenance:
Pearson, Paris.
Paul Cassirer, Berlin (at some point).
Neuman, Berlin (at some point).
Dr Max Emden, Hamburg.
Max Emden sale, Berlin, Ball & Graupe, 9 June 1931, no. 39.
Fritz Nathan, Saint-Gall (Switzerland).
Joerin, Basel.
Mrs. Florence Gould, New York.
Private collection.



240



Photo of the *tambourin*.

240

Fruit, decoration of a *tambourin*

Oil on leather. Diameter: 0.18
Signed and dedicated lower centre:
À M[*r* or *Me*?] *Reynier P G*
W213

The tight-knit brushstrokes, the vitality of certain contrasts and the fluent composition (which would perhaps have been outside Gauguin's range in the early 1880s) all suggest that this painting should be placed in 1886. On the modishness of the *tambourin* in the 1880s, see the other one that Gauguin decorated, *147*.
The dedication is not very clear; it is difficult to discern whether 'Mr' or 'Me' (the abbreviation for 'Madame' current at the turn of the 19th century) Reynier is intended. At all events, the dedicatee was known to both Gauguin and Schuffenecker. In September 1889, Gauguin told Schuffenecker 'I saw old Madame Reynier, who gave me news of you[1]'.
Malingue (**D**) informs us that Mme Reynier was a friend of Gauguin and Clovis when these two were living in rue Cail, and is said to have taken care of Clovis during his serious illness of early 1886, when Gauguin had been forced by financial straits to become a bill-poster and could not look after his son (see portraits *207* and *208*). Malingue (**D**) further implies that a Monsieur Reynier existed; but we know only that he died before 1900 when the widow Reynier moved into a modern four-room apartment at 8 rue Froidevaux[2].
Mme Reynier was certainly much closer to Schuffenecker than to Gauguin; eleven years after her move, Paul Schuffenecker asked her to be one of the witnesses at his marriage on 12 December 1911. She still lived at 8 rue Froidevaux at that date and was recorded as being sixty-five years old, so she must have been born in 1846. She had the remarkable first name Zelica.
Gauguin's sketchbook of 1888-1890[3] records that Mme Reynier received a Rouen landscape; no price is given, so she may have received it as a gift.

[1] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 1 September 1889 (Malingue LXXXVI).
[2] Land-register memorandum book.
[3] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 224.

Documents and bibliography:
M. Malingue: *Lettres de Gauguin à sa femme et à ses amis*, Paris, 1946, pp. 164, note 1, 165, note 1.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 213 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1960, no. 33.
Paris, Charpentier, 1960, no. 26[bis].
Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 7.

Provenance:
M. and Mme Reynier, Paris.
Albert A. Lucas, Paris, c. 1960.
Sale, Paris, Drouot, 28 February 1984, no. 52.
Private collection, Switzerland.

241

Two Women Bathing

Canvas. 0.875 × 0.700
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 87
W215



241

The title we have adopted is the one cited by Fénéon[1] in his review of the painting at Boussod et Valadon in January 1888: *Deux Baigneuses.*

This is a second composition comprising large figures; it follows in the wake of *Breton Women Chatting (237)*, and was also painted in the rue Lecourbe studio during the winter of 1886-1887. Here the clearly outlined and carefully drawn human figures take on their full importance. This was a formula of interest to a number of important modern painters of the time (see introduction to this period). Gauguin persisted with it till the end of his life.

As painted by Gauguin in the early summer of 1886 (*221*), the theme of the bathing place was still infused with an Impressionist ambience, whereas it here takes the form of large nudes by the water, an established classic in the hands of certain artists whom Gauguin particularly admired, such as Puvis de Chavannes or Cézanne. The figures have a strong carnal presence; they are treated with the realism of *Woman Sewing (64)*, but with much greater sensuality, and, like *Breton Women Chatting*, they immediately bring to mind the work of Degas. The painting retains a certain poetic realism, standing, one might say, halfway between



J.-F. Millet: *Goose-Girl Bathing*. Baltimore (Maryland), Walters Art Gallery.

the classical or 'abstract' monumentality of Puvis or Cézanne and the rustic poetry of works such as Millet's *Goose-Girl Bathing* – whose subject is not dissimilar.

Breton Women Chatting was a studio work showing little but figures; here the bathers are placed in a landscape that may originally have been drawn from nature. Indeed, it is just possible that the painting was started *in situ*, since the location perfectly matches the bathing place at the foot of Mount Saint-Guénolé, opposite the port of Pont-Aven, a place also represented in *223, 277* and *278*, though from completely different points of view.

Anonymous models ■ As with *Breton Women Chatting*, the figures undoubtedly derive from large preparatory drawings. True, no such drawing is known to us for the left-hand figure. One wonders, all the same, if the model was the obliging Marie Louarn (see the portrait, *293*).

By contrast, the study for the right-hand bather is well known. It was drawn in charcoal and pastel, and squared up for transfer to this canvas. Elegantly outlined in charcoal, the bather stands out against a



Woman Bathing, drawing. Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago, donation of Mrs Gilbert W. Chapman in memory of Charles B. Goodspeed.

coloured background of schematic shapes. This drawing is very different from the slightly conventional studies made during the summer of 1886 for *Breton Women Chatting*. It bears the inscription 'March 87', which is not only unusually precise but would seem to indicate that the pastel was done in Paris shortly before Gauguin set off for Central America on 11 April; it would imply, against all expectation, that the entire composition was rattled off in a very short time indeed. It seems more likely that the drawing was made either in Brittany during the previous summer, or during the winter in Paris, and dated when Gauguin put his last touches to it – perhaps when adding the pastel highlights.

Neither the style of this drawing (which was perhaps reworked anyway) nor any other piece of evidence exists to tell us whether Gauguin's model was Breton or Parisian. Breton women were extremely unlikely to pose nude and so a Pont-Aven drawing is by this token, implausible. Tradition has it that only one woman in Pont-Aven was willing to disrobe for Gauguin, as Marie Louarn certainly did (see *293*). We have another name from a different source, however; concerning certain Gauguin nudes drawn at Lezaven, Dr Palaux, a Pont-Aven and Le Pouldu 'regular', stated 'A native [of the place], Mademoiselle M.P. agreed to pose for him[2]'.

And so, despite the consensus of the written evidence suggesting that Gauguin had only one model, one wonders whether he did not, after all, unearth two – perhaps, indeed, the two women in the present work – and whether a woman of Pont-Aven younger, more timid and less memorable than Marie, did not, on occasion, pose nude for him. It is also possible, of course, that Marie Louarn had a second initial: 'P'.

Though we cannot rule out a Parisian model, Gauguin would have had the greatest difficulty in affording one; he was penniless, and Parisian models were more expensive than Breton ones.

By contrast, the clogs in the foreground and the pig in the background are undeniably of Breton origin; the latter went into Gauguin's 1884-1886 sketchbook[3] during the summer of 1886.

We should also note the contrasting areas of pallid and ruddy skin on the right-hand model which recur in *Bathers (297)* and *Woman with Pigs (320)*. This is the earliest example; the contrast seems to have been inspired by the sunburn on the woman's neck (no doubt drawn from life) and the exaggerated vulnerability with which Gauguin invests her body.

The tree between ■ The trunk that divides off one third of the painting is not completely new in Gauguin's work (see inset). But Gauguin here makes personal and highly significant use of the device, sharply contrasting the figures on either side. To the left, the full-blown redhead has already slipped down into the water's embrace. Gauguin's model here raises her hair in a gesture familiar from many Degas nudes. Modelled by the woman with the loosest morals in Pont-

Tree Trunks

Fénéon (**D**) states that the vertical tree in the foreground derives from Cézanne, and it is true that from the 1870s on Cézanne had been among the first to make systematic trial of the effects of tree trunks. Thus, for example, in Cézanne's *Auvers-sur-Oise Seen Through Trees* (Rewald 199), reproduced opposite Gauguin's *Bare Trees (186)*, they cross the whole face of the canvas from top to bottom; in his *Harvest* (Rewald 304) they frame the landscape; in the mid- 1880s, they form screens, sinuous and decorative as in certain views of L'Estaque (Rewald 395 and 396, one of which is reproduced opposite Gauguin's Martinican painting *Roadstead, 242*) or rhythmical, as in *Chestnut Trees at Le Jas de Bouffan* (Rewald 551).



E. Degas: *Jockeys before the Race*, c. 1881 (Lemoisne 649). Birmingham (Great Britain), Barber Institute of Fine Arts.

Seurat had similarly introduced both vegetable and architectural pillars into certain of his compositions to fine rhythmical or geometrical effect. But Degas was perhaps the most astonishing exponent of these 'partition' effects. For example, in the early 1880s, in *At the Milliner's* (Lemoisne 682) or *Jockeys before the Race* (Lemoisne 649) the entire space is sliced through from front to back.

Gauguin owned a Cézanne whose left-hand side is entirely bordered by a 'bundle' of



G. Seurat: *Factories beneath the Moon*, drawing, c. 1883 (Hauke 536). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Donation of Alexander and Gregoire Tarnopol).



Summer Landscape, fan, *W116*. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

vertical trunks (*Avenue*, Rewald 409, reproduced opposite *125*). And in 1885, he had painted a tree trunk traversing the surface of *Bare Trees (186)* from top to bottom, using a similar effect in a fan which is almost certainly earlier, and which, moreover, draws on Cézanne's *Harvest* for some of its motifs. Other very Cézannesque trunks make their rectilinear appearances in *223, 277* (in its original state), *278, 284,* and *286* (see also *Blue Trees, 319*).

The technique is in fact of Japanese origin. Wichmann[1] reproduces a large number of prints divided or rhythmically organised by



A. Hiroshige: *The Foxglove Tree Garden at Akasaka*, from the series of *A Hundred Views of Edo*, 1856. Collection of the galerie Jan et Hélène Lühl, Paris.

rectilinear trunks or bordered by sinuous screens of branches. However, though prints were clearly the inspiration for Seurat and Degas, it seems more likely that Gauguin was following the example of his colleagues; there is little evidence at this stage of his having any interest in Japanese art.

[1] S. Wichmann: *Japonisme*, Paris, 1982, pp. 251-257.



E. Degas: *Toilette*, drawing, 1884-1886 (Lemoisne 849). St. Petersburg, Hermitage Museum.

Aven (see portrait, *293*), this figure is certainly the starting point for the outstretching *Ondine* (W366) whom we see, two years later, abandoning herself to the incoming waves; a figure who, in that guise, was to appear again and again in Gauguin's work, accumulating a profound significance. To the right, a little creature devoid of grace and femininity alike, naïve face slightly sunburned but body wan and ageless, looks askance at the water and clings to the bank. Chastity, shivering with cold, counterpoints mature sensuality. This is something more than an amiable bathing scene; the line of thought first adumbrated here was to be a lasting one. Thus Jirat-Wasiutynski notes that the couple in this work prefigures that of *Life and Death* (W335), whose analogous bipolarity dates from 1889[4].

Animal incursion ■ There is a third personage abroad, and though discreet, its role is far from negligible: the pig, here for the first time associated with female nudity. Gauguin repeated this collocation the following year in *Heat of the Day (320)*, where its significance is more overt.

Arriving from the background, the pig steps purposefully toward the half-submerged bather. Passing close to the trembling figure on the bank, will he draw her in his wake beyond the boundary of the tree? And does that tree mark a fatal interdiction that she hesitates to flout? If so, the train of thought in this image leads directly to *Lost Maidenhead* (W412). The animal prepares to descend; the frail figure seems poised to abandon the high ground; is a moral judgement implied?

At all events, this work, like those of Gauguin's Symbolist period, is laden with significance. Dissolved in Impressionist form, it here remains obscure, emphasising the formal and mental development required before Gauguin's thought could find clear expression.

The letters of late 1886 and early 1887 show that the winter was very hard and brought Gauguin to the brink of depression. But we can never know the intimate thoughts of the artist as he painted this work. Rejection of the sensual life is portrayed here as a sickly warping; but the naïve features and skinny body in which that rejection is embodied engage our sympathy, while faceless sensuality is consigned to a lower station. Perhaps Gauguin felt himself threatened by certain of his own impulses, whether accepted or rejected. Hartrick tells us that Gauguin's motto in 1886 was 'No women' (see the portrait, *305*, and the inset on his relations with Madeleine). *Two Women Bathing* is our only clue that Gauguin might already, at this period, have been tending towards the more pragmatic sexual habits he later adopted. At all events, this little huddled figure for the first time exposes a wound, an intimate hurt that hereafter found expression in Gauguin's intermittent warping of form. Something similar transpires from the *Wrestlers (298)* that Gauguin painted the following year.

From this painting came not merely a chain of thought, but a series of motifs. The left-hand figure, as we have seen, foreshadows the future *Ondine*, while the right-hand one soon reappears in the most varied contexts: taken up in a fan (W216), for which Gauguin's 1884-1886 sketchbook[3] contains a hasty sketch, she makes a further appearance in a zincograph (Guérin 3) and in the ceramic pieces Gray 50 and 51; Gray 50, in its turn, was to feature in *Still Life (263)*. The bust in the pot Gray 63 and the zincograph Guérin 1 almost certainly also derive from this figure.

Several authors have suggested that Gauguin reworked the painting on his return from Martinique, but there is no clear proof of this.

[1] Fénéon, 1888 (**D**).
[2] Dr Palaux: *Quelques hôtes illustres du Pouldu*, post-1954 manuscript in the collection of the Musée de Pont-Aven, p. 2.
[3] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1884-1886 (Cogniat-Rewald, 1962), p. 33.
[4] Jirat-Wasiutynski, 1975 (**D**).
[5] Cogniat-Rewald, 1962, p. 90.



Pig, sketch. Gauguin's sketchbook, p. 33, detail. Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art.

Documents and bibliography:

F. Fénéon: 'Calendrier de Janvier. IV. Aux magasins des marchands de tableaux', *La Revue indépendante*, February 1888, pp. 307-308: 'At Van Gogh's (Boussod et Valadon gallery, boulevard Montmartre, 19) a new Gauguin is on deposit: *Two Women Bathing*. One, whom the water cuts off at the waist, exhibits broadly-drawn shoulders, the architecture of an opulent bourgeoise. On the meadow, a little servant girl with short, bristly hair stands aghast, astonishment writ large on her little snout; she watches the other shiver and doubts whether to take the last step. She rests her hands on knee and hip. A slender, smooth, rectilinear trunk, familiar from Cézanne, separates them, dividing the painting into two sealed compartments'.

Handwritten list of the works on deposit for sale with Boussod et Valadon, 1890, probably drawn up around October for Joyant when he took up the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and the Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): among the no. 30 canvases: 'Naked women bathing [FF] 400'.

J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'the Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.

C. Morice: 'Les Gauguins* du Petit Palais et de la rue Laffite', *Mercure de France*, February 1904, pp. 388-389: on the subject of a painting lent by Roger Marx to the *Salon d'automne*, Morice speaks of the 'sadness of these two graceless white nudes', allowing us to identify this painting. Morice sees in it a commentary on the 'human species bastardised by civilisation'.

M. Bodelsen: 'Gauguin's Bathing Girl', *The Burlington Magazine*, May 1959, pp. 186-188 (on the subsequent uses made of the central figure and works related to this painting).

Wildenstein, 1964, no. 215 (repr.).

V. Jirat-Wasiutynksi: *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (doctoral thesis, University of Princeton, 1975), microfilm version, 1993, pp. 232, 251, 280.

Exhibitions:

Presentation of the works of Gauguin, Paris, Boussod et Valadon, January 1888 (see Fénéon, **D** above).

Shown at Boussod until 21 February 1891, then at the Hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22 February before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.

Salon d'automne, Paris, Petit Palais, 1903, no number (*Study)*, see Morice's review, (**D**) above.

Copenhagen, Kleis, 1917, no. 30.

Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 34.

Gauguin et ses amis peintres en Bretagne, Aosta, Centro San Benigno, 1993, no number.

Paul Gauguin e l'avanguardia russa, Ferrara, Palazzo dei Diamanti, 1995, no. 37.

Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 32.

Provenance:

Deposited for sale with Boussod et Valadon, c. January 1888.

Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 17 in the catalogue, no. 18 in the auctioneer's book: *The Bathing Place*, FF 360 to Roger Marx.

Roger Marx sale, Paris, Manzi-Joyant, 11-12 May 1914, no. 28 (to Druet).

Tetzen-Lund, Copenhagen, c. 1917.

Galerie Barbazanges, Paris, around the first half of the 1920s.

Torcuato di Tella, Buenos Aires, c. 1950.

Bought in 1960 by:

Buenos Aires (Argentina), Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes – 7963.



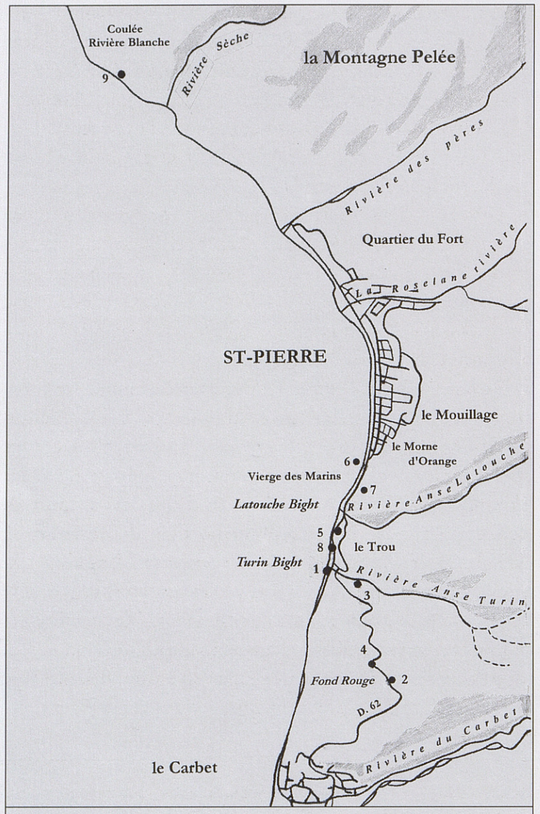
Breton Women Chatting (237), detail. ▶

In Martinique (June-November 1887)

During the winter of 1886-1887, Gauguin was on his uppers; he had lost his family, had not a penny to his name, and was close to depression. And in December he was ill. 'Time goes by with so little change in adversity that you see yourself sinking into the slough, you grow inert and all but cease to feel', he wrote in February[1]. Yet he contrived to avoid complete prostration: 'I can't go on living this deadly undermining existence', he told Mette[2]. 'I'm leaving with just enough for the trip and will arrive in America penniless – What I expect to do there, I still don't know myself […] but what I want more than anything is to get out of Paris, which is a desert for the pauper – My reputation as an artist is growing every day but in the meantime I sometimes go three days without eating which destroys not just my health but my energy. It's that I want back and I'm going to Panama to live like a savage. […] I'm taking my paints and brushes and I shall renew my strength far from mankind. I shall still suffer the absence of my family, but I shall be free of this beggary, which I hate[3]'.
'Savage': this is the key-word, toward whose vital and mysterious significance Gauguin was now steering.

A hut overlooking the sea ■ Disappointed by Panama, Gauguin and Laval (on whom, see his portrait, *238*) arrived a little before mid-June 1887 at the cosmopolitan and hospitable Saint-Pierre, which was, till the 1902 eruption of Mount Pelée, the capital of Martinique and 'pearl of the West Indies'. And, as Gauguin announced a few days after their arrival, they quickly found a place to live.
We do not know the address of this place, but can attempt to place it. In June, Gauguin wrote 'the two of us are living in a negro hut[4], and it is a Paradise compared to the isthmus [Panama]. Below, the sea is flanked by coco-palms, above there are fruit trees of all kinds twenty-five minutes from the town[5]'. In July, we hear more: '[W]e've found a negro hut right in the middle of a big property 2 km. from the town. Below us is the sea with a sandy beach for bathing; and on either side coco-palms and other fruit trees perfect for the landscape painter […] the estate we're on contains half a league of land a big house another smaller one a bit like the one we had in Rouen. Four negro huts besides. / For the moment it's worth 25-30,000 f and without any work just with the fruit it brings in 6,000 f a year plus food for the people who live here. By raising a few animals and cultivating a few vegetables you could double the revenue[6]'.
The places that fit this description are undoubtedly to the south of Saint-Pierre in the region of Le Carbet where many properties at one time produced guavas, mangoes, bananas, coconuts, sweet potatoes and manioc. These were taken to town daily either by the famous 'fruit path', which starts in the Mouillage quarter on the flank of Orange hill and runs along the coast (it appears in *Turin Bight*), or by the 'route des Mornes', which wound through the fruit-producing foothills of the interior; the course of the latter was probably close to that of today's D62. Le Carbet was seven kilometres from Saint-Pierre overland, but only two by the coast, so that when Gauguin tells us that it took twenty-five minutes to cover the two kilometres into town, he tells us little about the whereabouts of his hut (from the various coves, you could switch paths quite easily). There must have been any number of fruit plantations perched on hills above coco-palm-lined beaches that would meet Gauguin's description – most of them no doubt razed by the incandescent ash-cloud that engulfed the island during the eruption of 1902.

◀ *River under Trees, Martinique (246), detail.*



The numbered point on the map (except 9) indicate places where Gauguin set up his easel.

1. *Saint-Pierre Roadstead* (242)
2. *Palms and Gourd Tree* (243)
3. *River under Trees, Martinique* (246); *Conversation* (251); *Riverside* (252)
4. *Martinican Meadow* (247)
5. *Tropical Vegetation* (248)
6. *Near the Huts* (249)
7. *Mangoes* (250)
8. *Fruit Porters at Turin Bight* (253)
9. Site of the Guérin et Isnard factories in the background of *Near the Huts* (249)

Map of the Saint-Pierre region.

But of the motifs painted by Gauguin, those we have been able to identify lie within a relatively confined area, between the morne d'Orange and Fond Rouge, and most of them are grouped around Turin Bight. So it seems probable that the two painters lived on a fruit plantation, part of which overlooked that beach, rather than in the 'big house' of Latouche Bight as has generally been supposed in recent years. Pope reproduces an old plan of the Latouche Bight estate[7] which differs from Gauguin's description in a variety of ways: it is too close to the town, it included sugar plantations, and, in addition to the many outbuildings, it possessed no less than twenty-four negro huts. Finally, Planet, one of the first to research this question, also placed the relevant estate in the Turin Bight; indeed, he states that 'a road bridge over this estate still exists, carrying the road between Saint-Pierre and Fort-de-France[8]'; and a painting that, on stylistic criteria, might be among the first painted on Martinique, was painted precisely in Turin Bight (*242*).

A dozen works? ■ Vivid descriptions of the region and its activities by authors such as Dauprat give us some idea of the charming environment in which the two artists found themselves[9]. It was a life without money or amenities but so rich in natural beauty as momentarily to efface all memories of suffering past, at least until malaria and dysentery pinned Gauguin to his straw mattress.

There he was to remain, prostrate with exhaustion, for at least six of the nineteen weeks of his stay[10]. Merlhès places Gauguin's departure in the fourth week of October[11]; on that reckoning, he enjoyed three months of activity in which he produced the sixteen works now known to us: seven landscapes, seven works in which figures play an important part, and two still lifes.

Gauguin summed up his achievements thus: 'I'm hobbling along just enough to make up for lost time and do some good paintings. I shall bring back [ten or more *crossed out*] a dozen pictures, including four with figures, much better than my Pont-Aven period. […] what I'm bringing back is really first-rate: despite my physical weakness, my painting has never been so clear, so lucid (for example plenty of imagination)[12]'.

Now there are not twelve but sixteen Martinican pictures, and the number of those including figures is seven not four. It is quite possible, of course, that Gauguin only counted sizeable paintings and left out canvases nos. 6, 8 and 10, such as the little still lifes, *Martiniquaise (254)* and *Washerwoman (255)*. This would bring us back to a total of twelve. But it does not explain why Gauguin specifies eight landscapes and four paintings 'with figures', rather than seven landscapes and five paintings with figures. Did Gauguin mean that only four of the figure-paintings were 'much better than [his] Pont-Aven period'? Was he excluding his second *Turin Bight* view (*253*), a no. 12

canvas? Alternatively, that painting may have been started after his mid-October letter. Should we, in that case, suspect the existence of one further landscape painting? No definite conclusion is possible. The figure of a 'dozen' cannot be taken too literally; it may be the merest approximation.

Transformations ■ Although Gauguin's methods had not changed from those of the previous year (see inset), he was right to tell Schuffenecker that his work had advanced in leaps and bounds. Certain landscapes, such as *Tropical Vegetation (248)*, and several of his 'figure-paintings' show astonishing freedom in their progress toward decorative surfaces. Gauguin often uses subtly mixed colours, laying them on in simplified expanses within a discreet outline. The effect is slightly reminiscent of oriental carpets, an art in which certain discerning spirits were already interested, and which might have struck Gauguin himself by this date (see *Clovis, 208*, inset on the 'Gauguin paper', and *Blue Trees, 319*, inset). This development at times seems to foreshadow the (Synthetist) 'synthesis' of the following year; indeed, in 1904 Charles Morice roundly declared the Martinican pictures 'Synthetic'[13].

It was a surprising but ephemeral glimpse of the future, and soon gave way, on Gauguin's return to Paris, to different enterprises, among them, indeed, a return to classical Impressionism (see the introductions to the winter of 1887-1888 and the first part of Gauguin's 1888 Brittany campaign). The discoveries made in Martinique came into their own during the second part of the latter campaign, and their repercussions are fairly directly felt in Breton works such as *Autumn (313)*.

At the same time, more clearly than ever before, one has the impression that Gauguin had been studying the art of the Far East before leaving Paris. There seems to be a direct reference to Japanese art in *Roadstead (242)*, and in works like *Conversation (251)* and *Riverside (252)* the allusions are already both broader and deeper.

It is true that certain Degas works offered a model for these simplified, off-centre compositions, in which the horizon is eliminated and space is 'layered'. Indeed, they are, as such, typical of 'first wave' Japonisme (on which, see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset 'Van Gogh and the Transition…'). And the 'Japanese' framing of the portrait of *Laval's Profile (238)* is clearly indebted to Degas' example. But Gauguin goes at least as far as his model in certain paintings where space seems to float, and where the intangible atmosphere conjured by the blank spaces of the composition are, if anything, more evocative of ancient Oriental landscape painting than of Japanese prints.

The Martinican Drawings

The working-methods that Gauguin had adopted the previous summer (see *Breton Shepherdess, 233*, insets) became all but systematic during his time in Martinique. He began by accumulating rapid sketches: snapshots as it were. Enchanted by the grace of the *martiniquaises*, he wrote: 'Currently I'm doing no more than make sketch after sketch, so as to soak in their character, and then I shall get them to pose[1]'.

His vision of both the Martiniquais and of the animals that lived around the negro huts – cats, goats, pigs, chickens and monkeys – is captured in a number of sketches, and several of these make further appearances on canvas. However, we know of only three posed drawings, and therefore wonder whether Gauguin ever fulfilled the second part of his plan. These drawings make at least a partial appearance in *Mangoes (250)* and *Riverside (252)*.

Missing Drawings ■ In all likelihood, however, not all of his Martinican drawings are known to us, since for many of the figures that appear in the Martinique paintings there are no corresponding studies. It seems reasonable to suppose that such figures do, in fact, derive from sketches now unknown, particularly since certain of the little figures featured in the corners of the landscapes had, despite their anodyne appearance, a specific model. This is the case, for example, with certain figures in *Meadow (247)* and *Comings and Goings (245)*. The same must surely be true of other figures in *245, Scene with Mango Tree (244)* and *Mangoes (250)*, notably of the little boy who appears in all three. Moreover, the fact that, ten years later, the goat from *River (246)* and the little cat from *Negresses Chatting (251)* reappear in *Where Do We Come From?* seems to prove that, when Gauguin left for Tahiti, he had in his luggage some drawings now unknown. These missing drawings may have featured in the sketchbooks, albums and exercise books that served as Gauguin's repertory. When these were sold, after his death, they seem to have been in slightly greater number than those whose existence is known today. Will the Martinican drawings ever turn up again? After Gauguin's death, on 27 February 1904, the painter Luc-Olivier Merson wrote to De Monfreid, telling him that 'drawings, sketches and papers, a large number of them more or less crumpled and covered in dubious stains, were placed on the rubbish-heap, where they belonged', while 'the rest, scarcely more presentable, was put on sale'. Merson himself had undertaken this peremptory sorting; indeed, he had spent a whole afternoon on it[2]. So they may simply have been destroyed.

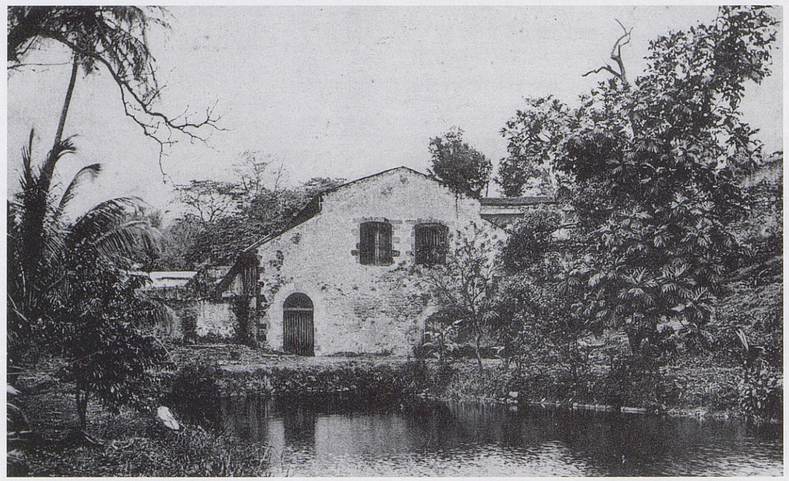
Putting motifs to work ■ This was also the period when Gauguin acquired a new freedom in the handling of his vocabulary of motifs by the simple method of reversing them (on this point, see *Riverside (252)*, inset). He also combined the striking elements of different sketches in order to obtain a new and more satisfying figure (on this see *Comings and Goings, 245, Riverside, 252, Conversation, 251* and the second view of the *Turin Bight, 253*.)

[1] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, early July (Merlhès 129). More extensive quotations can be found in the entry for *Comings and Goings (245)*.

[2] J. Loize: *Les Amitiés du peintre Georges-Daniel de Monfreid…*, 1951, no. 356.



The market at Saint-Pierre, old postcard.



A plantation near Saint-Pierre, old postcard.

Rebirth ■ One thing is strikingly clear. Gauguin's spirits had lifted. Perhaps there was a sense of purgation by malady. Certainly he was rejuvenated by contact with this simple life, which resembled his earliest childhood in Peru. He was renewed by Edenic nature. It was a return to the 'primitive' or 'original' state, 'original' [*sauvage*] in the sense of the Goncourts' observation that 'Humanity found everything in its original state: animals, fruit and love[14]'.

The very civilised Goncourt brothers made several very penetrating remarks about the natural state. Gauguin's life and work, in their turn, yield a variety of senses for the word (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset, and *Fruit, 312*). But the one that he seems to have found in Martinique is one of the purest and happiest senses of the word – it is the 'rejuvenation' that he spoke of some years later[15], the regeneration of a heart and soul disburdened. In consequence, several of the Martinican works exhibit a 'lofty poetry' that Vincent Van Gogh was quick to acclaim[16]. As a state of mind it was transitory, but its latent influence remained; it was the state of grace that Gauguin rediscovered in Tahiti, and which was to imbue *Noa Noa*.

Shortly before he left for Tahiti, Gauguin confided in Morice: 'My Martinican experience […] was decisive. There alone have I felt truly myself, and it is in what I brought back from there that you must seek me, if you want to know what I am, more even than in my Breton works[17]'.

For most of the Martinican paintings, we possess only relatively recent data on provenance. This makes it difficult to establish which paintings are referred to in the older information about ownership, and often a number of different hypotheses can be made. In order to simplify matters, we have for the most part confined ourselves to a single hypothesis per work.

[1] Gauguin to Mette, February 1887 (Merlhès 120).
[2] Gauguin to Mette, March 1887 (Merlhès 121).
[3] Gauguin to Mette, late March 1887 (Merlhès 122).
[4] This term is used to translate the French *case à nègre*, more exactly 'nigger hut'; the racism of the term is enrooted in the history of Martinique and of slavery in the French speaking-world [Translator's note].
[5] Gauguin to Mette, 20 June 1887 (Merlhès 127).
[6] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, in V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées,* 1989, pp. 39-41.
[7] K. Pope: *Gauguin and Martinique* (doctoral thesis, University of Austin, Texas, 1981), microfilm edition, 1986, fig. 95.
[8] M.G. Planet: 'Gauguin à la Martinique', *Bulletin d'information du Syndicat intercommunal d'aménagement touristique du Nord*, no. 2, January 1973, pp. 25-31.
[9] Cited by Pope, 1980, above, pp. 70-103; V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, pp. 462, note 223, 463-464, note 227; V. Merlhès, *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, 1989, pp. 44-47.
[10] See Merlhès, 1984, pp. 464-465, note 228 for an attempt to calculate the length of Gauguin's stay.
[11] Merlhès, 1984, p. 469, note 234.
[12] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 2nd week of October 1887 (Merlhès 133).
[13] C. Morice: 'Les Gauguins* du Petit Palais et de la rue Laffitte', *Mercure de France*, February 1904, p. 395.
[14] E. de Goncourt: *Journal*, February 1854. [The key word *sauvage* in French means not only 'savage' but 'wild', instinctive, spontaneous, in a state of nature, non-domesticated, primitive, original, unadulterated by civilisation or contact with humankind; translation of it must therefore vary between 'wild', 'primitive', 'original' and 'savage' [Translator's note].
[15] Gauguin to Strindberg, February 1895 (Malingue CLIV).
[16] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 20 May 1888 (B5).
[17] Morice, 1919, p. 81.



242

242
Saint-Pierre Roadstead

Canvas. 0.54 × 0.90
W217

The motif of this painting was identified with great precision by V.W. Van Gogh (**D**), thanks to the spur of white rock at Le Trou. It runs out into the sea to the right of the picture, hiding the town of Saint-Pierre a little to the north. A narrow passage ran through the rock, which separates Turin from Latouche Bight; travellers had to set down their burden and drag it along behind them. It has since been considerably enlarged, and today the coast road runs through it.
Gauguin set up his easel immediately south of the mouth of the Turin Bight river. Between the trunks of the raisin trees, which still grow in profusion on the southern part of the beach, we see the hull of a *gommier*, a typical local vessel. In the background are the flanks of Mount Pélée, with its summit wreathed in clouds. On 8 May 1902, an incandescent ash-cloud flowed from its crater, razing Saint-Pierre, the capital of Martinique in Gauguin's time, and annihilating in an instant its 30,000 inhabitants. It passed through the entire region where Gauguin had lived, incinerating everything that lay in its path as far as Le Carbet.



The site today.

To the left, along the sea's edge, passes the fruit-porters' path mentioned in the introduction to this period. Garaud, a traveller of the time, described it as 'winding along the coast, through the greenery, indistinct beneath the rocks then again clear on the beach. It is much frequented from early morning on, this narrow path; along it go the Le Carbet negresses who lengthen their stride in the effort to reach Saint-Pierre and sell their coconut milk early […] you see them running, bare foot, dress lifted to the knee, carrying on their heads wooden buckets, here called *traits*, full of coconuts still in their green shells[1]'. Other aspects of these portage paths are shown in *Comings and Goings (245)* and perhaps in *Scene with Mango Tree (244)*.

The similarity of this landscape to the twelfth of Hokusai's *Twenty-Six Views of Mount Fuji: Hodogaya on the Tokaido Road* has often been noted, and other views from that series, especially *Lake Suwa*, could also be compared. The similarity lies in the rhythmic brown trunks and green foliage of the foreground screening a volcano on a background of white and blue. Though similar screens of sinuous branches can also be found in Cézanne's work – and we know that this was an aspect of Cézanne that interested Gauguin (see *Two Women Bathing, 241*, inset) – the similarity is such that the suspicion of direct influence is unavoidable. An Oriental atmosphere pervades certain of Gauguin's compositions of this period (see introduction to this period). It is possible that *253* is a variant of this picture; elements of it reappear in the fan W237.



K. Hokusai: *Lake Suwa in the Province of Shinano*, from the series *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji*.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



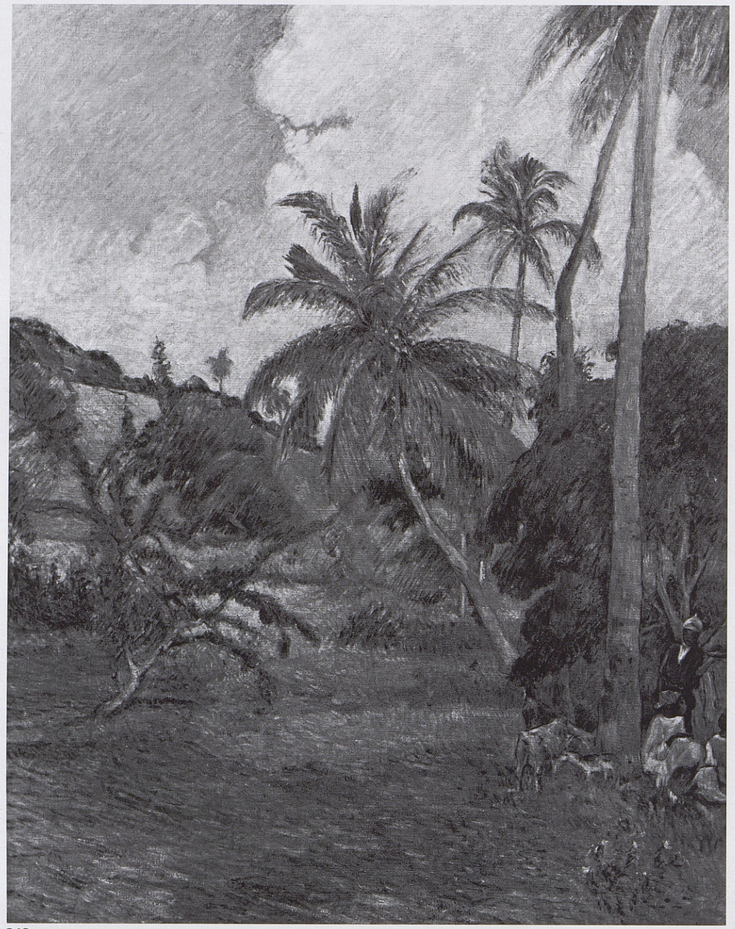
P. Cézanne: *L'Estaque* (Rewald 395).
Paris, Musée Picasso.

[1] L. Garaud: *Trois ans à la Martinique*, 1892, in K. Pope, 1981 (**D**), p. 101.

Provenance:
Nothing proves that this picture was indeed the 'Martinique' exchanged with Guillaumin (see Gauguin's sketchbook, **D**), and there are many other possible candidates. The swap may well have involved a work of medium format, like this one. Moreover, we do not know what Gauguin received in exchange for his painting, since the Guillaumins listed by Bodelsen ('Gauguin, the Collector', *The Burlington Magazine*, September 1970, pp. 607-608) seem all to have been acquired before 1884. Around the time of the Volpini exhibition, Guillaumin was still confined to a more classical Impressionism than Gauguin, and their friendship cooled around 1889. It is therefore possible that Guillaumin sold his Martinican Gauguin quite soon after.
Dr Saxtorp, Copenhagen.
Helge Jacobsen, Copenhagen, c. 1926.
Given by Helge Jacobsen in 1927 to:
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek – IN 1825.

Documents and bibliography:
(?) Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 224: 'Guillaumin Martinique swapped' (see **P**).
V.W. Van Gogh: 'Enkele Notities over Gauguin op Martinique', *Museum Journaal* (Otterlo), 1960, pp. 15-16 (repr.), identifies the site of this work and *253*.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 217 (repr.).
K. Pope: *Gauguin and Martinique* (doctoral thesis, University of Austin, Texas, 1981), microfilm edition, 1986, pp. 140-145, fig. 114-116 (with photographs of the motif).
J. Loize: *Paul Gauguin fit une merveilleuse découverte de la Martinique*, Le Carbet, 1990, pp. 40-43 (repr, with photo of Turin Bight).

Exhibitions:
Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen, 1926, no. 10.
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 25 or 28 depending on the edition.
Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 17.
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1948, no. 31.
Gauguin på Tahiti, Humblebaek (Denmark), Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 1982, no. 1.



243

243
Palms and Gourd Tree

Canvas. 1.12 × 0.87
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 87
W231

The gourd tree is the little one on the left. The line of crests suggests that this view was painted on the 'route des Mornes' looking towards Le Carbet, a little after Fond Rouge, and perhaps 250 metres south of the meadow seen in *247*. The rather deliberate composition may suggest that this is one of Gauguin's earliest Martinican works. In the knowledge that even very small figures in the corners of certain Martinican landscapes are sometimes taken from more detailed drawings (see, for example, *Comings and Goings*, *245*), one wonders whether the face of the woman sitting against the palm tree was inspired by a pastel of the bust of a Martiniquaise (W299, reproduced opposite *Riverside*, *252*); this belonged to the Van Gogh brothers and shows some resemblance. The woman carrying the bowl is reminiscent of a figure visible in the second *Turin Bight (253)*; they may both be based on a sketch of a further Martiniquaise, who holds her head differently from either.

Documents and bibliography:

(?) Julien Leclercq to William Molard, Christiania, 7 January 1898: 'I have two Gauguin pictures in this exhibition [at Christiania], one is a rather pretty Brittany landscape, belonging to an art-lover who wants to sell it, the other is the big Martinique landscape I had in Paris, and which you have seen […] This exhibition is to continue in Stockholm from 7 to 25 February at the "Kunstföreningen". Then at Helsingfors [Helsinki]. Then in Berlin'.

(?) F.v.O. [Fritz von Ostini]: 'Französische Künstler im Münchner Kunstverein', *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 6 September 1906: cites the Martinican landscapes exhibited in Germany (in P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven…*, Sigmaringen, 1997, pp. 33, 87, note 86).
(?) R.S. [Richard Stiller]: 'Die Ausstellung der französischen Maler bei Arnold', *Dresdner Anzeiger*, 23 November 1906: cites the large Martinican landscape exhibited in Germany (in Kropmanns, 1997, pp. 33, 88, note 89).
[Review of the Golden Fleece Salon], *Zolotoe Runo* [The Golden Fleece], Moscow, 1908, no. 7-9, p. 56 (repr.): states that the work was exhibited in Moscow in 1908 (Russian original).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 231 (repr.).



Martinican woman holding bowl, detail of a sketch.
Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Exhibitions:

(?) Touring exhibition of French artists organised by J. Leclercq in Christiania [Oslo] in January 1898, in Stockholm in February (*Utställning af arbeten af franska Konstnärer*, Sveriges Allmänna Konstförening, no. 22: *Martinique Landscape, 1887*, for sale at 360 crowns), in Göteborg in April (or March-April) and in Berlin in May (or April-May) 1898. With the exception of the Swedish catalogue, these exhibitions are known to us only via extracts from the correspondence of Leclercq and W. Molard communicated to us by Judith Gérard, Molard's daughter. Among these works (all of which were for sale) was a 'large Martinican landscape' (see letter of 7 January 1898, **D** above). We do not know whether the planned Helsinki exhibition mentioned in the letter took place.
(?) *Ausstellung Französischer Künstler*, Germany 1906-1907 (Munich, Kunstverein, September 1906; Frankfurt, Kunstverein, October; Dresden, Arnold, November; Karlsruhe, Badischer Kunstverein, December-January; Stuttgart, Württembergischer Kunstverein, January 1907), no. 39: *Large Landscape of Martinique*, Schuffenecker collection, for sale.
Golden Fleece Salon, Moscow, 1908, no. 68 (see **D** above).
Oslo, Kunstnerforbundet, 1955, no. 12.

Provenance:

Is this the 'large Martinican landscape' that Molard had seen in Leclercq's hands in Paris prior to its departure for Scandinavia, probably in 1897? The term 'large landscape' might legitimately refer to a no. 50 canvas without major figures in it, though this description also fits *River (246)*; however, we do not know whether Mette Gauguin could have sent *River* to Paris after the Danish exhibition of 1893. The poet, journalist and critic Julien Leclercq (1865-1901) was quite close to Gauguin between the latter's first and second stays in Tahiti, and even took over Gauguin's studio on rue Vercingétorix in 1895. (The studio had not been completely cleared, according to the catalogue of a sale of autographs in Marseille on 14 December 1986, no. 90.) How he could claim to have any rights in a large Martinican landscape in 1898, we do not know. However, a letter from Gauguin tells us that 'Leclercq has given up Bing in order to become an art-dealer' (Gauguin to De Monfreid, November 1897, Segalen XXXVIII). Having failed to sell any Gauguins during his tour of Scandinavia, Leclerq returned the Martinican landscape to Paris with the others in May 1898 (according to an unpublished letter from Leclercq to Molard, Berlin, 13 May), thus restoring the painting to the Parisian market.
Is this work the *Large Martinican Landscape* that featured in the exhibition touring Germany 1906-1907, catalogued as belonging to Schuffenecker and for sale? This must be one or both of the Schuffenecker brothers (on Amédée Schuffenecker, who dealt in the works of Gauguin during the first quarter of the 20th century, see *Geese in the Meadow, 184*, inset).
The existence of Druet-Vizzavona photos of this picture – nos. 2476 and 2564 – seems to confirm its presence in France around 1906.
Private collection, Norway, c. 1955.
The Estate of A.M. Sonnabend, New York, c. 1965.
Baron Edmond de Rothschild, Geneva.
Private collection.

244
Martinican Scene with Mango Tree

Canvas. 0.92 × 0.72
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 87
W230

See reproduction overleaf.

The big tree on the left is the mango. Also on the left, there is what looks like a colonial house surrounded by a verandah. On the right, we seem to see one of its outhouses (kitchen, little factory, storehouse, or hut). But it has proved impossible to determine whether this scene is from Latouche or Turin Bight, or indeed on the 'route des Mornes', where there might equally be little stretches of flat ground with large trees growing on them. The presence of women-porters has suggested to some authors that Gauguin was painting beside one of the 'fruit-paths' linking Le Carbet to Saint-Pierre.

Documents and bibliography:

J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale – amongst which is a *Martinique* that may be this painting – Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Vollard Archives, sales register 1894-1897, entry for 12 October 1895: 'Monsieur Donop […] credit [for] 1 Gauguin canvas (92 × 72) landscape of Martinique [FF] 150'; and 7 March 1896: 'Monsieur Mondain outstanding [for] 1 Gauguin 92 × 72 Donop V19 [FF] 700.
(?) Gauguin to De Monfreid, October 1900 (Joly-Segalen LXVIII): 'I read an article in Fontainas' *Mercure* which seems to say that at the Exposition Universelle*, either in the Centennial or the Decennial, a picture of mine was exhibited. This is a strange way of going about things, without telling the painters: so people are going to judge me, and on what basis, I ask you? What indeed: any old painting, chosen by someone like Roger Marx, completely anodyne and consequently almost meaningless'. It should be noted that, though J. Bernheim-Jeune testifies to the presence of this *Martinique* in the exhibition (see letter,

1904, **D** below), the fact is not established (see **E** below).
J. Bernheim-Jeune to O. Maus, 4 February 1904), archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): announces the dispatch to La Libre Esthétique of this picture, which figured in the 1900 Exhibition.
L'Art moderne et quelques aspects de l'art d'autrefois d'après la collection privée de J. et G. Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, 1919, vol. I, pl. 57.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 230 (repr.).
K. Pope: *Gauguin and Martinique* (doctoral thesis, University of Austin, Texas, 1981), microfilm edition, 1986, pp. 131-136.

Exhibitions:
Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the Hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22 February before the sale on 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events were equivalent to exhibitions.
(?) *Exposition centennale de l'art français 1800-1899*, Paris, Exposition universelle, 1900, ex-catalogue: according to Bernheim-Jeune (see 1904 letter, **D** above, and 1904 exhibition, **E** below), this picture appeared in the *Exposition centennale*. However, neither the catalogue of the exhibition nor any review mentions the presence of a Martinican work. Thus Gustave Kahn ('L'art à l'Exposition. La Décennale', *La Plume*, 15 November 1900, p. 681) states that Gauguin's 'older work alone is represented in the Centennial, by a pretty, calm, delicate Brittany landscape […]'.
Exposition des peintres impressionnistes [La Libre Esthétique], Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, 1904, no. 51: *Tahiti Landscape*, Exposition centennale, 1900, belongs to Messrs. J. and G. Bernheim-Jeune.
Baltimore (Maryland), The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1936, no. 3.
San Francisco (California), San Francisco Museum of Art, 1936, no. 3.
Cézanne, Gauguin, Toledo (Ohio), The Toledo Museum of Art, 1936, no. 2.



244



245

Provenance:
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 2: *Martinique* (or, in the auctioneer's book, 'Martinique Landscape, 260 f. to Monsieur de Billioux, 2 rue Alfred Stevens)'. This was in fact Dr de Bellio, who lived at 2 rue A.-Stevens, and was then in the process of renewing his collection.
On De Bellio, see *Presbytery (228)*, **P**.
Donop de Monchy, De Bellio's son-in-law, 1894.
Sold by Donop de Monchy to Vollard on 12 October 1895, for FF 150 (see Vollard Archives, **D** above).
Bought from Vollard by Monsieur Mondain, 7 March 1896, for FF 700 (see Vollard Archives, **D** above). Vollard's address book gives Mondain's address as 'palais des Marchands rue Baudrière at Angers'.
J. and G. Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, c. 1904.
Justin K. Thannhauser, New York, unspecified date.
Bought from C.H. Worcester by Knoedler, New York, Étienne Bignou and Alex Reid and Lefevre in 1931 (Knoedler no. A1334).
Alfred Cowles in August 1941.
Jack Chrysler, New York, 1950.
Harold Uris, New York.
Harold and Ruth Uris sale, New York, Christie's, 13 November 1996, no. 23.

245
Comings and Goings

Canvas. 0.725 × 0.920
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 87

This title was given to the work by Gauguin himself at his 1891 sale, and it suggests that the scene here is set on the famous 'fruit path' mentioned in the introduction to this period. There Gauguin remarked on the 'continual coming and going of negresses decked out in tawdry colours, their gracious movements infinitely varied'; they had delighted him from the moment of his

arrival. 'Their gestures are very characteristic,' he observed, 'and the hands play an important role in harmony with the swaying of the hips[1]'.
The sway of the hips is clear in one of the figures walking, but none of Gauguin's known drawings can be directly related either to her or to the other *porteuse*. Such drawings may, of course, have existed nevertheless (see introduction to this period, inset on drawings). At all events, it seems clear that the two seated women and the sheep between them were not drawn from nature but introduced to structure the landscape, using earlier drawings, in accordance with Gauguin's standard practice (see *Breton Shepherdess, 233*).



Back view of squatting woman, detail of a page of sketches. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des dessins, fonds du Musée d'Orsay. Photo: RMN.

Though no known sketch affords identical figures, connections can be made for the two seated women. The woman squatting with her back to the spectator, 'centring' the picture, is no doubt the first version of this figure, variants of which are to be found in *Negresses Chatting (251)* and *Turin Bight (253)*. She is somewhat like a rapid sketch on a loose leaf now in the collection of the Louvre. But that sketch may not be the only model. Despite the similarity of the pose, there are some differences of proportion and angle. In particular, the Louvre sketch lacks the curious little triangular scarf binding the waist of this figure in all three versions, a detail that was surely noted from life.
For the woman seated under the tree we have a more certain original: the posture is borrowed from a large pastel of a Martiniquaise, reproduced in *252*. There are a few modifications: the position of a hand, and the woman's features. Her face has been replaced by the one (also) borne by a pink-clad woman seated on the right of *Turin Bight (253)*. The origin of both might be a little ink sketch of a seated woman wearing an identical hat, on a loose leaf reproduced opposite *Turin Bight*.
The sheep show no resemblance to any known Martinican sketches of animals. Certain of them, in particular the two brown animals, one standing, one lying, on either side of the tree trunk, are familiar to us from *Breton Shepherdess (233)*. Whether Gauguin had with him the sketchbook in which he had first drawn them[2] or whether he reproduced them from memory, we do not know. The central sheep is drawn with a precision that firmly establishes the existence of a preliminary sketch now unknown. It reappears in the fan W237.
The spotted kid stretched out behind the bush on the left might be a true native of Martinique; it is no doubt the same animal that we see lying in the background of *River (246)*, though it is there reversed, a practice that Gauguin was developing over the course of this year (see *Riverside, 252*, inset).
The perfunctorily-drawn chicken running out of the right of the picture closely resembles an equally rapid sketch on a page of Martinican drawings.
The foliage with its 'shower' of diagonal brushstrokes, in Fénéon's words[3], are manifestations of Gauguin's previous practices which were themselves inspired by Cézanne (see *Watering Place I, 194*). But the overall treatment is quite new: the division into large areas of colour shows Gauguin moving steadily away from Impressionism (on which, see introduction to this period).



Hen, detail of a page of sketches. Photo: Sotheby's.

[1] Gauguin to É. Schuffenecker, early July 1887 (Merlhès 129).
[2] Gauguin's sketchbook, 1884-1886 (Cogniat-Rewald, 1962), pp. 101-103.
[3] Fénéon, 1888 (D).

Documents and bibliography:
F. Fénéon: 'Calendrier de décembre. V. Vitrines des marchands de tableaux', *La Revue indépendante*, 15 January 1888, p. 170: Fénéon describes a painting on show at Boussod et Valadon: 'in the first-floor rooms – since the ground-floor walls are overrun with easy-to-dispose-of vignettes […] From a voyage to the West Indies (1887), [Gauguin] has brought back a Martinican landscape, which – with its pink thicket, the dense foliage of its central tree under which women are dozing off, its ochre path with two natives carrying baskets – brings to mind old engraved illustrations of the islands. Through the weighty green of the foliage comes the shout of a red roof, as in any true Gauguin. Barbarous and melancholy in character and rather lacking in atmospheric "feel", with its colours laid on in a shower of diagonal brushstrokes falling from right to left…'.
Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and the Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): 'Martinique two landscapes 300 f each'. Given that the presence of this work at Boussod's in December 1887 is attested by Fénéon's review, and that the FF 300 price befits a no. 30 canvas in this list, the present work must have been one of these two landscapes.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
'Petite chronique', *L'Art moderne* (Brussels), 8 March 1891, p. 81 – on the subject of the Gauguin sale of 23 February: 'Gauguin's art is not yet (thank the Lord!) adopted, admitted, classified and priced by the bourgeois press. And yet, odd though it seems, we saw the auction prices reach relatively high levels […] *Comings and Goings (Martinique)* was sold for 505 francs […] the price of the other pictures was, on average, from 300 to 350 francs'.
Manuscript inventory of the Degas collection (Brame Archives): '93c – 72c / Landscape of Martinique Negro huts in the trees – to the left, on the horizon, windmill / exchanged with Manzi after the 1st sale at the hôtel' [the windmill is in fact a palm-tree].

Exhibitions:
Shown alongside works by Guillaumin and Pissarro in the first-floor rooms at Boussod et Valadon, December 1887 (see Fénéon review, **D** above).
Shown at Boussod until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22nd before the Gauguin sale of 23 February: Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events were equivalent to exhibitions.



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Tokyo, National Museum of Modern Art, and Aichi, Prefectural Art Museum, 1987, no. 20.
Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 29.

Provenance:
Deposited for sale with Boussod et Valadon, c. December 1887 (see Fénéon review and Boussod inventory, **D** above).
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 15 in the sale and 16 in the auctioneer's book (*Comings and Goings*, to Manzi, 505 F).
Exchanged by Michel Manzi with Degas after the 1891 sale (see Degas inventory, **D** above).
Degas sale, Paris, Drouot, 26-27 March 1918, no. 45 (to Hessel).
Jos Hessel, Paris.
Gladys Deacon, subsequently Duchess of Marlborough, London.
Comte Jean Palffy, Lausanne.
Baronne Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, 1979.

246
River under Trees, Martinique

Canvas. 0.90 × 1.16
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 87
W226

This river, bordered by meadowland, might be Turin Bight river, whose bed is slightly less embanked than that of Latouche Bight river. Two years earlier, Gauguin had found similar motifs of water shadowed by trees in the Dieppe region (*191-196*); comparison between the classic Impressionism of the 1885 paintings and the surfaces of this painting with their marbled hatching and subtly mixed colours makes it clear how far Gauguin had come.
The presence of a goat lying in the shade on the edge of the field, in the centre of the



Goat, detail of *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* Boston (Massachusetts), Museum of Fine Arts.

picture, is worth dwelling on. As Pope (**D**) points out, the same goat reappears beside the child seated in the left foreground of *Where Do We Come From?* Moreover, the little cat drinking milk on the right of that child is of Martinican origin too; it is first found in *Negresses Chatting (251*, q.v.*)*. Since Gauguin did not have these two works with him when he painted *Where Do We Come From?*, we must assume that he used Martinican drawings and sketches now unknown when including these creatures in the later painting (see introduction to this period, inset on drawings). The kid that appears to the left of *Comings and Goings (245)* may be inspired by the same lost sketch as the animal here.

The cow on the extreme left raises not dissimilar questions. It is reminiscent of the one that stands front-stage in a seascape of the summer of 1886: *234*. Here again, we are left to wonder whether Gauguin drew it from memory, from the fairly similar but not identical sketch on the first page of his



Detail of *234*.

1884-1888 sketchbook[1], or from some original sketch now unknown.

[1] Cogniat-Rewald, 1962.



Cow, sketch. Gauguin's sketchbook, p. 1, detail. Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art.

Documents and bibliography:

Perhaps: O. Mirbeau: 'Paul Gauguin', *L'Écho de Paris*, 16 February 1891, p. 1: referring to Gauguin's Martinican production as a whole, Mirbeau remarks: 'In this undergrowth full of monstrous vegetation and flora, with its formidable torrents of sun, there is an almost religious mystery, a sacred abundance quite Edenic'. One wonders whether this picture was one of those that Mirbeau had seen in Paris when preparing this article, in which the Gauguin sale of 23 February was announced.

Wildenstein, 1964, no. 226 (repr.).

K. Pope: *Gauguin and Martinique* (doctoral thesis, University of Austin, Texas, 1981), microfilm edition, 1986, pp. 121, 129-131, 171.

P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven*, Sigmaringen, 1997, p. 27.

Exhibitions:

Probably: *Den Frie Udstilling*, Copenhagen, Free Exhibitions Building, 1893, no. 142: *Under the Trees*, 1889, 0.89 × 1.15. No other painting fits this description so well, despite the difference of date; and inaccuracies are not lacking in the catalogue of this exhibition.

Elfte Ausstellung der Berliner Secession, Berlin, April-September 1906, no. 99 (in Kropmanns, 1997, p. 27).

Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-1950, no. 12.

Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1960, no. 34.

Vienna, Belvedere, 1960, no. 9.

Wegbereiter der modernen Kunst, Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Seurat, Hamburg, Kunstverein, 1963, no. 40.

Gauguin og Van Gogh i København i 1893, Charlottenlund, Ordrupgaard, 1984, no. 25 (not exhibited).

Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 33 (exhibited in Washington only).

Provenance:

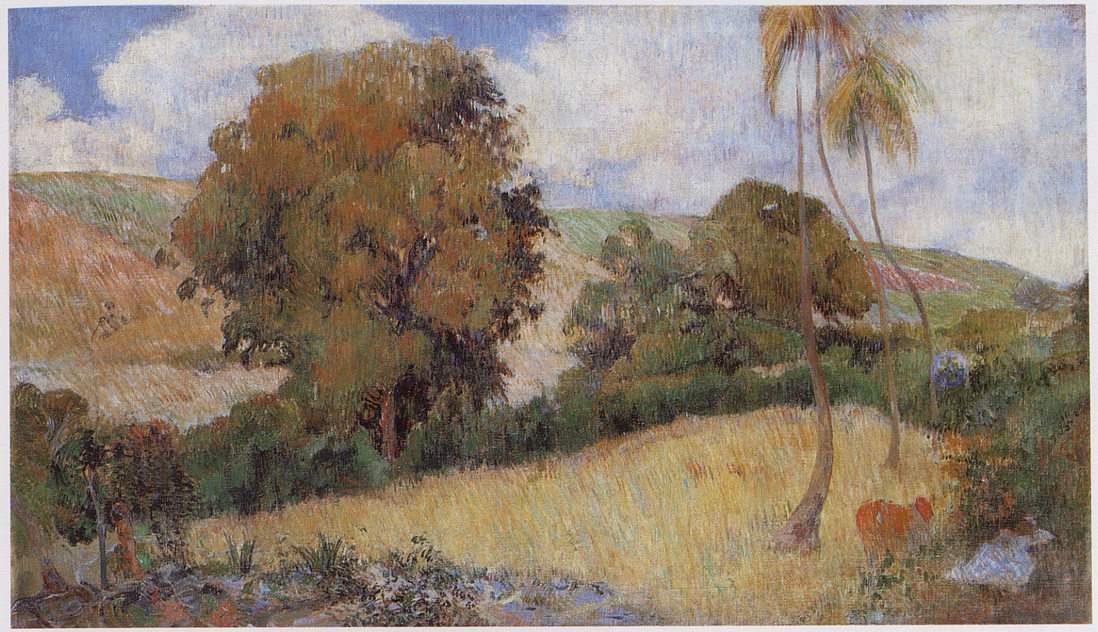
May have been seen in Paris in 1891 by O. Mirbeau (**D** above).

If it is indeed the picture exhibited in Copenhagen in 1893, it would have been sent by Schuffenecker or De Monfreid to Mette Gauguin (or possibly taken back with her to Copenhagen when she visited Paris in May 1892), and may have remained in Mette's hands after the exhibition.

Bought from Cassirer by Hugo von Tschudi in 1904 with a view to its entering the collection of the Berlin Nationalgalerie, this work was eventually taken by Von Tschudi to Munich in 1909.

It entered the Bavarian public collections in 1912 after donation by E. Arnhold and P. and R. Mendelssohn in memory of von Tschudi and was exhibited at the Neue Pinakothek:

Munich, Neue Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen – 8653.



247

247
Martinican Meadow

Canvas. 0.670 × 1.145

The sea is invisible at the foot of the hills, in the background to the right. The viewpoint is close to today's D62 road, and no doubt also to the old 'route des Mornes'. We are looking south-southwest, probably close to Fond Rouge and less than a kilometre from Turin Bight.



Looking south from the D62 between Saint-Pierre and Le Carbet.



Martinican Woman Bending Over, drawing. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Woman Lying Down, drawing. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

One might easily think that the two little figures traced in one corner of the painting are sketches made from nature in the manner of snapshots; in fact, they were based on two very precise little drawings, reproduced opposite. The background of *Mangoes (250)* shows a stooping woman in profile similar to the one in this picture.

Exhibition:

Oslo, Kunstnerforbundet, 1955, no. 11.

Provenance:

Found before the First World War by the Norwegian collector Rasmus Wold Meyer from Bergen (Norway), under another Gauguin picture that he had bought shortly before – the two canvases were nailed to the same stretcher – according to a letter from the architect A. Arneberg to Leif Höegh of 15 March 1958. Arneberg explains that he was close to Meyer and helped him to constitute his collection; that he was present in Bergen when this canvas was discovered; and that, as far as he could remember, the uppermost Gauguin (alas, unidentified) that was hiding the present picture had been bought by Meyer in Paris.

Finn Meyer, son of the above, Bergen.

Bought from Finn Meyer by Leif and Lucy Höegh, Oslo.

Private collection.



248

248
Tropical Vegetation

Canvas. 1.16 × 0.89
Signed and dated lower right:
1887 / P Gauguin
W232

This view is from an elevation south of Latouche Bight river and Orange hill, just above Le Trou. Gauguin was looking north-northwest, since the pale line of the lava-flow rivière Blanche appears in the centre of the picture, at the foot of one of the outworks of Mount Pélee. The town of Saint-Pierre is invisible below the vegetation which occupies the entire picture: in the tall slim branches of the papaya, the dome-shaped breadfruit tree in profile against the bay, and the flowering laurel, it offers a small sample of the rich Martinican flora. Frèches-Thory reminds us that Saint-Pierre could boast a Botanical Garden that supplied numerous European and colonial parks with exotic plants[1].



Photo taken a little to the west of the current D62, level with Le Trou.

This vision of an omnipresent and uninhabited nature – a cock stands immobile (half-masked by the laurel), sole tenant of these domains – may have been among those that elicited Mirbeau's 1891 remarks about the Edenic, almost sacred, character of Gauguin's Martinican works[2].

This landscape moves further than ever from the Impressionist tradition in its monumentality and the decorative aspect of its composition: simplified surfaces whose subtly mixed colours are lightly outlined, as if inspired by the Oriental carpets so dear to Gauguin's heart (see introduction to this period). The overall effect foreshadows Synthetism. Also of note is the way in which the treatment of vegetation in this landscape seems to have left strong traces in certain landscapes of the following year, such as *Autumn (313)*.

[1] In the catalogue of the Washington, Chicago and Paris exhibition of 1988-1989.
[2] Mirbeau, 1891 (**D**).

Documents and bibliography:

(?) A. Retté: 'Bars et brasseries à l'Exposition', *La Vogue*, July or August 1889, p. 155: Retté speaks of the café Volpini, 'a café completely out of phase with the very *comme il faut* atmosphere prevailing at the Exposition as a whole./ This café, then, attracts me, I confess; here the paintings of Monsieur Gauguin modulate upon the walls some exotic tone-scale […] [he notes a series of motifs that he has picked out in the pictures that he has seen:] 'the slender form of a palm-tree rises above a tranquil horizon of water and toned-down greenery […] It is Martinique, I believe'. The description also fits *Near the Huts (249)* or possibly *Mangoes (250)*, which we know featured in this exhibition. However, as *Mangoes* is mentioned a few lines below in the same review (see *250*, **D**), it seems likely that the slender palm-tree belongs in another picture. If it refers to this painting, Retté clearly did not know a palm from a papaya.
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952): p. 222 '[sold to] Chausson (Martinique) [FF] 500'. This note is between those of sales made in September and October 1890, offering a presumption but no proof of the dates of these transactions, which may have been entered retrospectively.
Perhaps: O. Mirbeau: 'Paul Gauguin', *L'Écho de Paris*, 16 February 1891, p. 1: referring to Gauguin's Martinican production as a whole, Mirbeau remarks: 'In this undergrowth full of monstrous vegetation and flora, with its formidable torrents of sun, there is an almost religious mystery, a sacred abundance quite Edenic'. Perhaps this picture was one of those that Mirbeau had seen in Paris when preparing this article.
Gauguin to Octave Maus during the preparation of the 1894 exhibition: 'For [the picture belonging to] Monsieur Chausson, please make arrangements with him directly' (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 232 (repr.).
K. Pope: *Gauguin and Martinique* (doctoral thesis, University of Austin, Texas, 1981), microfilm edition, 1986, pp. 122-126, with a recent photo of the motif, fig. 101.

Exhibitions:

(?) *Peintures du groupe impressionniste et synthétiste*, Paris, Exposition universelle, Volpini café on the Champ-de-Mars, summer 1889, ex-catalogue (see Retté, **D** above).
Première exposition [de La Libre Esthétique], Brussels, 1894, no. 188.
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1906, no. 211.
Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, and London, Tate Gallery, 1955, no. 19.
Post-Impressionism, London, Royal Academy of Arts, 1979-1980, no. 83.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 31 [exhibited in Chicago and Paris only].
Gauguin and the School of Pont-Aven, London, Royal Academy of Arts, and Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, 1989-1990, no. G supp. 3.
Gauguin, les XX et La Libre Esthétique, Liège, Salle Saint-Georges, 1994-1995, no. 11.
Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 30.

Provenance:

On the stretcher, the inscription 'M.[onsieur] Chausson' is still visible. As Gauguin's sketchbook indicates, this picture was bought from him by the composer Ernest Chausson (1855-1899) whose house, which can still be seen at 22 boulevard de Courcelles, Paris, was a meeting place for modern artists, writers and musicians. A letter from Gauguin to Redon (Arï Redon, ed.: *Lettres* […] *à Odilon Redon*, Paris, Éditions José Corti, 1960, pp. 194-195) seeks to impose a speculation on Chausson, who had already, in August, bought *Oranges in a Vase*: 'I have a very delicate matter to ask of you. I believe I've heard you say that your friend Fabre, the musician, knows Chausson. Could he not whisper to him that he should speculate in my pictures. That is buy up a large number of paintings at a low price. With his connections, he could sell off a part of them at a higher price, and so he'd have got the remainder for nothing. / Especially as he could do this with his brother-in-law Lerolle, who is also rich, and who has already bought a painting from me' (the painter



Chausson at twenty-eight.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Henry Lerolle, whose wife, née Escudier, was Chausson's sister-in-law, had bought *Negresses Chatting, 251*, in June 1889). These machinations did not result in the block-purchase that Gauguin was then so avidly seeking; but it may be that Redon, who was an old friend of Chausson's, influenced the latter to buy this painting.
Mme Ernest Chausson (née Jeanne Escudier), Paris, 1899.
Galerie Barbazanges, Paris, c. 1923.
Lefevre Gallery, London.
Mrs R.A. Workman, London, c. 1926.
Samuel Courtauld, London, 1928.
Sir Evan Charteris, London.
Mr and Mrs Alexander Maitland, Edinburgh, 1932.
Donated by Sir Alexander Maitland in 1960 to: **Edinburgh (Great Britain), National Gallery of Scotland –2220.**



Squatting woman, detail of a page of sketches. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des dessins, fonds du Musée d'Orsay. Photo: RMN.



Squatting woman, detail of a page of sketches. Photo: Ader-Tajan.

249
Near the Huts

Canvas. 0.90 × 0.55
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 87
W221

With their masonry foundations, painted plank walls and tiled roofs, these houses are of a type that can still be seen on the shore between Saint-Pierre et Le Carbet. They are screened from the beach by a sort of hedgerow slightly below them, whose foliage can be seen here between the huts. A corner of the bay of Saint-Pierre appears at the apex of the hut roofs. Madame Dauphite, Custodian of the Gauguin Museum in Le Carbet, tells us that the thin white line flanking the blue waters of the bay indicates the presence of the Guérin et Isnard factories which stood two kilometres north of town at the bottom of the lava-flow rivière Blanche[1]. On 5 May 1902, three days before Saint-Pierre was annihilated by an incandescent ash-cloud, the factories were submerged in a tide of volcanic mud. The position of the factories and the profile of the hills overlooking them suggest that Gauguin found these huts in the Mouillage quarter.



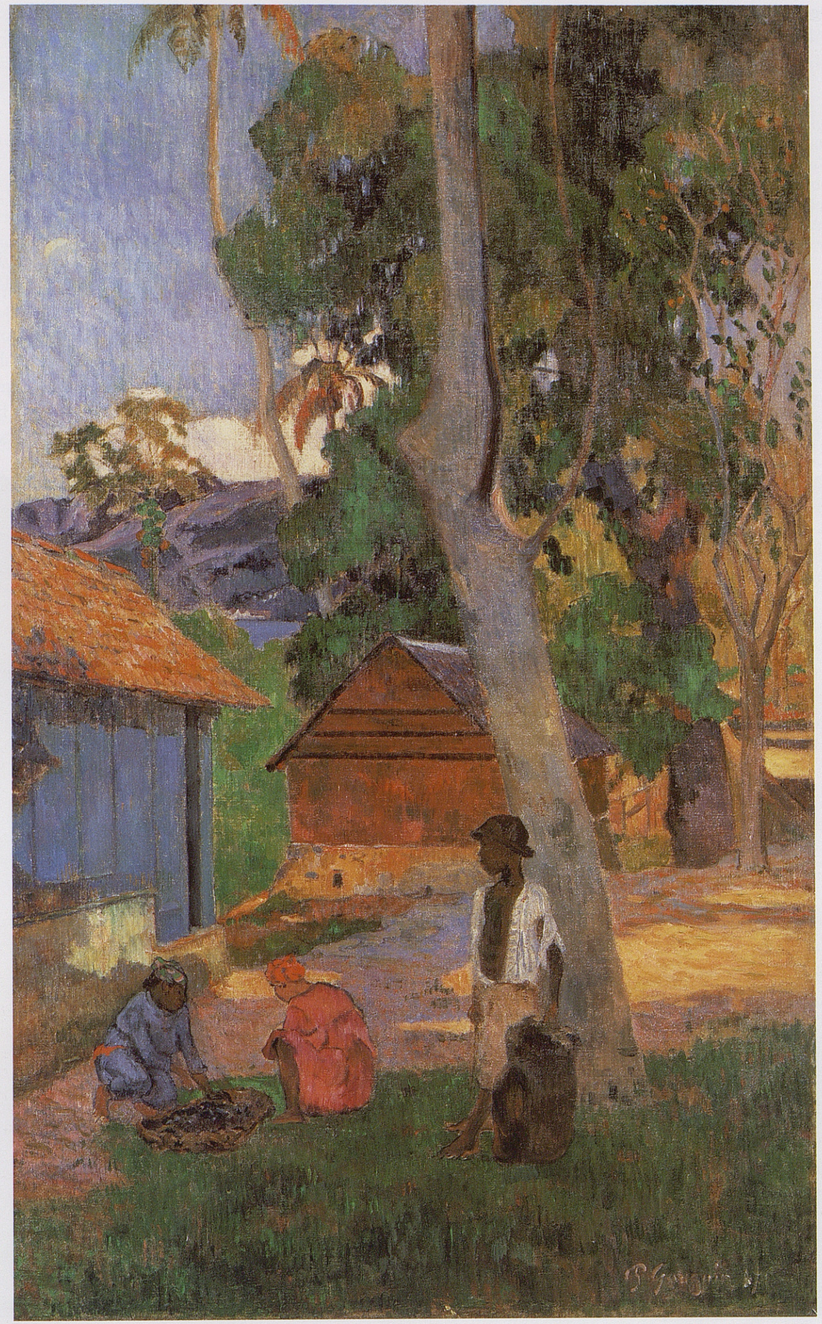
The bay of Saint-Pierre seen from Mouillage beach.

Madame Dauphite further observes that the two women are squatting next to an almost empty sack of coal, and that one of these women must be the coal-seller; the boy holds a sack full of this fuel, which is still widely used in Martinique.
Two surviving pages of sketches contain those used for the female figures here. We know of no drawing for the little boy but note that the boy and the central tree appear facing the other way in *Riverside (252)*; see that work for information about the figure of the boy, and about reversals in general, which grow increasingly common in Gauguin's work. The treatment of those two motifs is slightly more studied in this painting, which might suggest that they first appeared here; this, however, offers no clue to the way the boy would be facing should a hypothetical original drawing reappear. A house very similar to the one on the right here appears in a fan of slightly later date (W223).

[1] Pope, 1981, fig. 122 (D) publishes an old photo of these factories.

Documents and bibliography:

This picture must be one of the four pictures 'with figures' that Gauguin mentions in a letter to Émile Schuffenecker written in October 1887 (Merlhès 133 – see introduction to the Martinique period).
(?) Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted around October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): this list mentions not only a 'large [Martinique] with figures' (see *250*), but 'Martinique, two landscapes, 300 frs each'. One of the latter was a no. 30 canvas: *Comings and Goings (245)*. The price of the second was the same; it may therefore have been the same size, and, if so, may have been this work.
(?) List of services requested of De Monfreid by Gauguin when the latter left for Tahiti in April 1891 (J. Loize: *Les Amitiés du peintre Georges-Daniel de Monfreid…*, 1951, no. 123): on the back of the slip of paper, Gauguin noted the titles of certain works that he particularly wanted De Monfreid to sell, among which is a 'large picture of Martinique 400 fr' and an 'upright [i.e. portrait-format] Martinique 300 fr'. The lower price may suggest a smaller format than that of the 'big' Martinican pictures (which are all on no. 50 canvases) and may therefore refer to the present work.
(?) Ev.O. [Fritz von Ostini]: 'Französische Künstler im Münchner Kunstverein', *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 6 September 1906: cites the Martinican landscapes exhibited in Germany (in P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven im Deutschland* […], Sigmaringen, 1997, pp. 33, 87, note 86).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 221 (repr.).
K. Pope: *Gauguin and Martinique* (doctoral thesis, University of Austin, Texas, 1981), microfilm edition, 1986, pp. 114, 149, 151-156, fig. 121 (houses typical of Le Carbet), fig. 122 (Guérin and Isnard factories).



249

J. Loize: *Paul Gauguin fit une merveilleuse découverte de la Martinique*, Le Carbet, 1990, pp. 22, 25-26 (repr.).

Exhibitions:

(?) *Ausstellung Französischer Künstler*, Germany 1906-1907 (Munich, Kunstverein, September 1906; Frankfurt, Kunstverein, October; Dresden, Arnold, November; Karlsruhe, Badischer Kunstverein, December-January; Stuttgart, Württembergischer Kunstverein, January 1907), no. 38: *Martinique Landscape*, Schuffenecker collection, for sale.
Opening Exhibition, Springfield (Massachusetts), Museum of Fine Arts, 1933, no. 115.

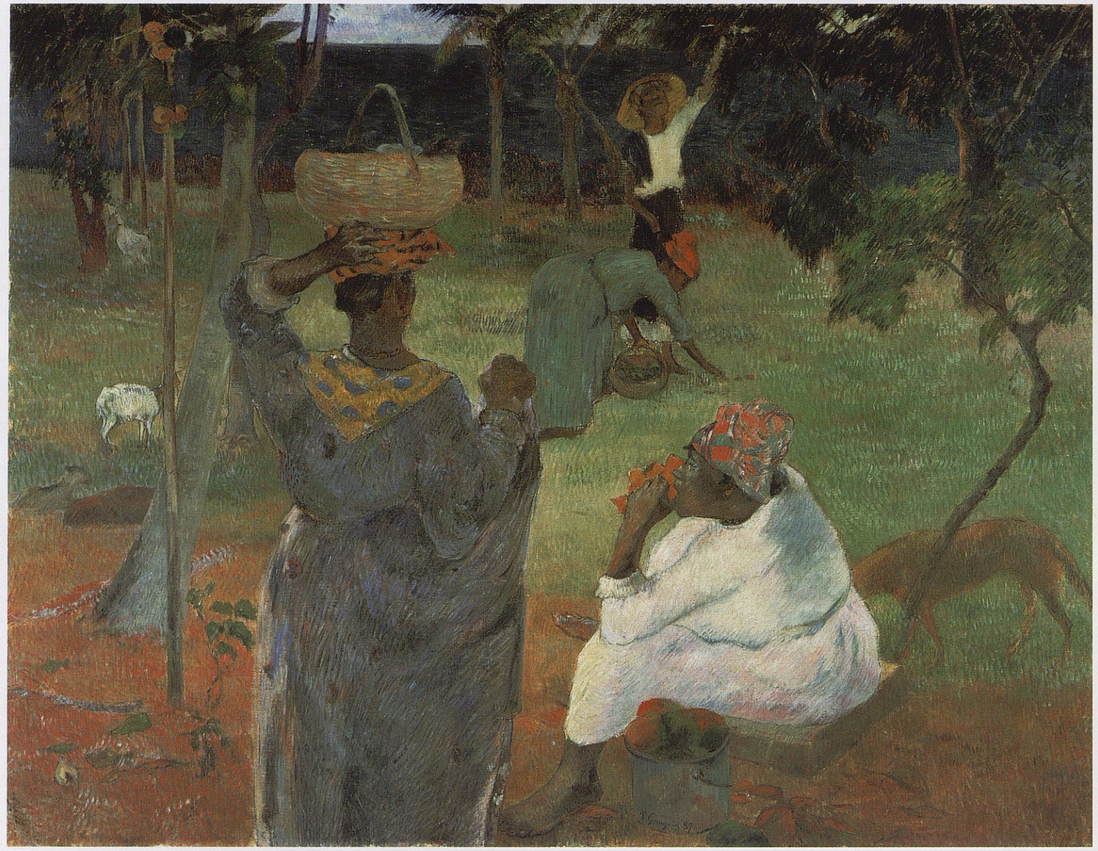
Provenance:

(?) On deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890 (see 1890 inventory, **D** above).
Is this the *Martinique Landscape* from the exhibition that toured Germany in 1906-1907, catalogued as belonging to Schuffenecker and for sale? This must be one or both of the Schuffenecker brothers (on Amédée Schuffenecker, who traded in Gauguin's works in the first quarter of the 20th century, see *Geese in the Meadow, 184*, inset).
Bernheim-Jeune.
Cornelius J. Sullivan, U.S.A., c. 1933.
Mrs Cornelius J. Sullivan sale, New York, Parke Bernet, 6-7 December 1939, no. 55.
Bought from the above by William McKim, Palm Beach (Florida).
The Estate of Charlotte B. McKim sale, Sotheby's Parke-Bernet, 16 May 1979, no. 222.
Private collection, Japan.

250
Fruit-Picking or Mangoes

Canvas. 0.89 × 1.16
Signed and dated lower centre:
P Gauguin 87
W224

This is the most elaborate of the Martinican paintings. It is comparable to the previous summer's *Breton Women Chatting (237)* in its careful composition, monumental figures in static postures, meticulous brush work and zone-by-zone treatment with each lightly outlined – though here, by contrast, the space is layered in successive planes.



250

The scene is set on Orange hill in a field of fruit trees occupying part of the shelf of land on which the statue of the Vierge de Bon Port stands. The view is out over the sea, to the west; Pope[1] has published a recent photo of the site, now thoroughly overgrown. *Mangoes* was the title chosen by Gauguin for the 1889 exhibitions, and the mangoes in question can be seen in the bucket beside the seated woman (the signature is on the bucket). Perhaps they came from the all but invisible tree up into which the figure in the background is stretching. To the left is a slim papaya tree bearing ripe fruit.
Early in his stay, Gauguin announced that he wanted to pose and draw *martiniquaises*, though he seems rarely to have had the opportunity (see introduction to the Martinique period, inset). This is one of the few works for which we have a relatively detailed figure-study: the two women in the foreground have been faithfully copied from a large charcoal study with pastel highlights that was squared off for transfer to the canvas. The dimensions of the seated woman are unchanged, while the woman standing next to her has, as Jirat-Wasiutynski and Newton point out, been enlarged roughly one and half times[2].
The woman bending over in the background is fairly similar to the one in *Meadow (247)*; she, in her turn, is derived from a little pencil sketch. No drawing is known for the woman reaching up to pluck fruit though her well-defined posture suggests that such a sketch may well have existed.
The long curve of the dog's spine may derive from the outline of an animal drinking from a bowl, seen in a hasty sketch made on the corner of a page which is now in the Louvre. The Louvre dog faces the other way, but this does not rule it out, since Gauguin not infrequently reversed his studies (see *Riverside, 252*, inset). The same long-backed silhouette reappears in Tahitian paintings such as *I raro te oviri* (W431) of 1891 and *Te arii vahine* (W542) of 1896 (where it is also reversed). Was it copied from this modest sketch, or did Gauguin take to Tahiti a more detailed study, now lost? (On the missing drawings, see introduction to this period.) The sheep centre-left is distantly reminiscent of certain studies from Gauguin's 1884-1886 sketchbook[3], while the goat alongside it is meticulously copied from one leaf of a sketchbook since broken up and dispersed.
This painting was unanimously considered the most important of Gauguin's Martinique period: by Gauguin himself, who included it in the two avant-garde exhibitions of 1889; by Theo Van Gogh, who bought it; and by Vincent Van Gogh, for whom, as we see in the many letters cited below, the 'lofty poetry' of this painting constituted a paradigm of excellence. Émile Bernard noted: 'the virtues of style and colour, and the characteristic draughtsmanship, make this the best work that Gauguin painted in that period[4]'. And in the eyes of many progressive artists it acquired the status of a manifesto. Over and above the formal qualities cited by Bernard, it was, perhaps, its charming atmosphere and exotic, even Edenic, subject matter that made such an impression.
Several months later, Gauguin borrowed from this painting a number of outline drawings – a goat, the crown of the papaya tree and several of the figures – noting them down in an album of motifs for use in the decoration of pots[5].

[1] Pope, 1981, p. 167 (**D**).
[2] Jirat-Wasiutynksi and Newton, 1991, pp. 65-66 (**D**).
[3] Gauguin's sketchbook, 1884-1886, Cogniat-Rewald, 1962, pp. 100-104.
[4] Bernard, 1904 (**D**).
[5] Album Briant, pp. 21-22 (Musée du Louvre, département des Arts graphiques, fonds du Musée d'Orsay).



Dog, detail of a page of sketches. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des dessins, fonds du Musée d'Orsay.
Photo: RMN.



Goat, detail of a page of sketches.
Photo: Godeau-Solanet-Audap.



Martinican Women, drawing. Private collection.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Documents and bibliography:

This is definitely one of the four pictures 'with figures' that Gauguin mentioned in his letter to Schuffenecker in the second half of October 1887 (Merlhès 133; see introduction to this period for an extract).
Receipt signed by Gauguin for Theo Van Gogh, 4 January 1888: 'Received from Monsieur Van Gogh the sum of four hundred francs for a picture 'Negresses' / Paris, 4 January 1888' (V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, p. 57). We do not know whether this receipt, which is dated 4 January (a Wednesday), relates to the purchase mentioned shortly before: 'Sunday someone from Goupil came round who was very enthusiastic about my pictures and finally bought three paintings for 900 f' (Gauguin to Mette, December 1887 or early January 1888, Merlhès 138: for candidates for the other two pictures, see the seascapes *235* and *236*, and *Beach, Dieppe, 178*).
Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 20 May 1888 (B5): 'his negresses are lofty poetry and everything from his hand is sweet, forlorn, and astonishing'.
Russell to Vincent Van Gogh, 22 July 1888 (501b, more extensively quoted in *Negresses Chatting, 251*): Russel was unwilling to buy a Gauguin work, finding those that he had seen inferior to the present work: 'that big one of yours unfortunately swamps them in my opinion'.
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, c. 25-26 July 1888 (514): '[Russel] implies that he doesn't want any lower quality than ours'.

Vincent to Wilhelmine Van Gogh, c. 31 July 1888 (W5): 'Theo some time ago bought from him a big picture that shows negresses dressed in pink, blue, orange and yellow cotton under tamarinds, coconut-palms, banana trees, [with] the sea in the distance. A little like the description of Otahiti in *Le Mariage de Loti*'.
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, early August 1888 (516): 'If we pushed Russel he might perhaps take the Gauguin that you bought, and if there were no other way of coming to Gauguin's assistance, what should we do? […] strictly speaking, it wouldn't matter to us if we parted with the big painting but […] should we not keep it till his prices have tripled or quadrupled […] In this case, Gauguin should say he gave it to *you* at that price because you're a friend, and won't have you giving it away to some other art-lover at that price'.
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 8 August 1888 (519).
Vincent to Wilhelmine Van Gogh, second fortnight of August 1888 (W6): 'what do you think of the Gauguin with the negresses that Theo has'.
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 4-7 October (545) and 8 October 1888 (546): Vincent compares the sadness of the *Self-portrait (309)* with the richness of *'Negresses' [Mangoes]*.
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, c. 9-12 November 1888 (561): 'his *Harvesters* [*317*] is as fine as the Negresses [*Mangoes*] and if you paid let's say the same price as the Negresses (400 I believe) that would certainly still be good'.
List sent by Gauguin to Octave Maus in late 1888, indicating the prices for the works due to feature in the February 1889 exhibition of les XX: marked 'sold to Monsieur Van Gogh', this is the only work for which no price is given. Theo was not, apparently, willing to part with it.
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 72: preparatory list for the exhibition of les XX: '[no.] 50 [canvas] Martinique'; p. 73, definitive list: '[no.] 1 Mangoes Van Gogh'; p. 225: '[sold to] Van Gogh Martinique [FF] 400'.
Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, spring 1889 (Malingue LXXVII), during the preparation of the Volpini exhibition: 'Mangoes, Martinique' heads the list of works to be shown.
A. Retté: 'Bars et brasseries à l'Exposition', *La Vogue*, July or August 1889, p. 155: 'amid the spreading pools of blue shadow, negresses squat down or contemplate the distance in hieratic pose'.
Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drawn up in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (Rewald, *GBA*, 1973, p. 49) – at the top of the page: 'Martinique two landscapes, 300 frs each [this might refer to *245* and *249*]; the big one has figures'. At the bottom of the page, the note: 'The big landscape with figures from Martinique is for sale 1500 frs but 300 frs are to be deducted that Van Gogh advanced me on his own account'. (Despite the difference in price, we think that this picture is the *Negresses [Mangoes]* bought by Theo Van Gogh in January 1888: see **P.**).
(?) List of services requested of De Monfreid by Gauguin when he left for Tahiti in April 1891 (J. Loize: *Les Amitiés du peintre Georges-Daniel de Monfreid…*, 1951, no. 123): on the back of the slip of paper is a list of four paintings that Monfreid was probably asked to make special efforts to sell. One of these at least – *Still Life with Oranges* – was included in the Boussod inventory of 1890. The others include an 'upright [portrait-format] Martinique 300 frs' that might be *249*, and a 'big painting of Martinique 400 frs', surely one of the four no. 50 canvases, which might be the present painting. Gauguin, desperate to raise money at the time, must in that case have reduced the price from FF 1,500.
[Émile Bernard]: 'Extraits de lettres de Vincent Van Gogh à Émile Bernard', *Mercure de France*, April 1893, p. 336 (citing an extract from Vincent Van Gogh's letter of 20 May 1888, above).
Gauguin to Jo Van Gogh-Bonger (widow of Theo), 4 May 1894 (Cooper GAC 45): 'The big painting that you have of mine, the one of Martinique […] was sold to Theo only temporarily as a security against my returning 300 f that he had advanced me. I only mention this in order to tell you that I am delighted to contribute in some small degree to the slender fortunes of your son. Which is, after all, only just; your husband enormously contributed to our prosperity by his devotion and intelligence'.
J. Leclercq: 'La lutte pour les peintres', *Mercure de France*, November 1894, pp. 268-269 (cites letter from Vincent Van Gogh, 4-7 October 1888, 545, above).
É. Bernard: 'Concernant Paul Gauguin', *Nouvelle revue d'Égypte*, January 1904, p. 8: 'It was at Vincent's house that I saw the first exotic Gauguins'. This is followed by a description of this work, which Bernard deems the best of the period.
É. Bernard: *L'Aventure de ma vie* (manuscript completed c. 1939/40, in the collection of the Bibliothèque du Louvre), p. 75: 'Monsieur Gauguin had returned from Martinique with numerous studies. The most beautiful one, which had been bought from him by Théodore Van Gogh, Vincent's brother, showed Negresses in a field by the sea. It was heavy and sombre in its colours but noble in style, despite its rather cramped and hesitant execution'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 224 (repr.).
Z. Amishai-Maisels: *Gauguin's Religious Themes* (doctoral thesis, Hebrew University, 1969), revised edition, 1985, p. 281, note 104.
J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, pp. 18 (repr.), 19, 31, 61, notes 33 and 35, 64, note 109, 82, 88, notes 168 and 169.
K. Pope: *Gauguin and Martinique* (doctoral thesis, University of Austin, Texas, 1981), microfilm edition, 1986, pp. 164-165, fig. 167 (photograph of the motif).
V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, p. 472, note 236 (10).
V. Jirat-Wasiutynski and T. Newton: 'Tradition et innovation […]', *Actes du colloque Gauguin […]1989*, Paris, 1991, pp. 65-67 (reproduces a montage of infrared reflectograms of the large seated figure).

Exhibitions:

6e exposition des XX, Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, February 1889, no. 1: *Mangoes (Tropics)*.
Peintures du groupe impressionniste et synthétiste, Paris, Exposition universelle, Volpini premises on the Champ-de-Mars, summer 1889, no. 32: *Mangoes, Martinique*, belonging to Monsieur Van Gogh.
Exhibition of the Moderne Kunst Kring, Suasso Municipal Museum [future Stedelijk Museum of Modern Art], Amsterdam, 1912, no. 14.
London, Leicester Galleries, 1924, no. 60.
Vincent Van Gogh en zijn Tijdgenooten, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1930, no. 154.
Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, and London, Tate Gallery, 1955, no. 17.
Palm Beach (Florida), Society of the Four Arts, 1956, no. 5.
Coral Gables (Florida), Joe and Emily Lowe Art Gallery, 1956, no. 4.
New York, Wildenstein, 1956, no. 7.
Vincent Van Gogh et ses amis, Mons, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1958, no. 45
Collectie Theo Van Gogh, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, and Otterlo, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, 1960, no. 45.
Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, 1970, no. 4.
Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Toronto (Ontario), Art Gallery of Ontario, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, 1981, no. 46.

Provenance:

The many documentary sources cited above seem to diverge on the subject of how Theo Van Gogh acquired this work from Gauguin. The overwhelming majority refer to a purchase: Gauguin's 4 January receipt specifying a price of FF 400; letters from Vincent Van Gogh (see **D** above: W5, c. 31 July 1888; 516, early August; 561, 9-12 November specifying the price of FF 400), the list of prices sent to Maus in late 1888, Gauguin's sketchbook c. 1888-1890, the 1889 exhibition catalogues, the testimony of É. Bernard (1904 and c. 1939): all these documents tell us that the work belonged to Theo Van Gogh, and thus to the common collection of the two Van Gogh brothers.
However, two other sources – the Boussod inventory of 1890 and the letter to Jo Bonger of 1894 – speak of a 'big painting of Martinique with figures' which was not sold to Theo, but given as security for a 300-franc advance. This can only refer to the present picture, and is perfectly consistent with the 1,500-franc price cited in the inventory, since the work was considered Gauguin's Martinican masterpiece. Rewald suggests that, after Theo's departure, Gauguin regretted parting with the painting, and tried, more or less consciously, to renege on the conditions of its sale (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 64, note 109). It seems more likely that the transaction was a temporizing solution from the outset. Vincent's August 1888 letter (516, **D** above) shows that the work could have been sold on at a higher price; a similar transaction was envisaged for the sale of *Human Misery (317)*. Or was the sale accompanied by a sort of oral agreement, a repurchase clause, as Merlhès suggests (1984, **D** above)? At all events, the picture seems to have spent some time in the Boussod gallery, since it is cited in the 1890 inventory. But Johanna Van Gogh-Bonger, Theo's widow, clearly considered it part of her husband's collection, since she took it to Holland after Theo's death. Gauguin ultimately acknowledged her ownership of the work (1894 letter, **D** above).
V.W. Van Gogh, Laren (Netherlands), 1925.
Lent by V.W. Van Gogh to the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in 1930, where the work remained until the creation of the Van Gogh Museum.
Vincent Van Gogh Stichting, Amsterdam, 1962, exhibited since 1973 at:
Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum – S221 V/1962.



251

251
Negresses Chatting or Conversation (Tropics)

Canvas. 0.61 × 0.76
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 87
W227

The two titles are Gauguin's, one from his 1888-1890 sketchbook[1], the other from the exhibition of les XX in 1889.
In the large tray of the left-hand woman, one can make out little plantains, and per-

haps a sweet lime in the bowl held by her friend. The women are *martiniquaises* such as Gauguin saw daily on the 'fruit paths', as he noted in early July (see introduction to this period, inset on drawings, and *245*): 'they carry heavy loads on their heads and talk twenty to the dozen as they move. Their gestures are very characteristic, and the hands play an important role in harmony with the swaying of the hips"[1].

Animated as the figures are, it is their 'conversation' on which the painting focuses. If we exclude the very modest garden scene, *175*, the present work is one of Gauguin's first treatments of this very fertile theme to which he intermittently returned. Here one of the *martiniquaises* looks out at the spectator; this combines with the unknown words they exchange to create a sense of mystery prefiguring the atmosphere of certain Tahitian scenes.

The verticality of the space – there is no horizon – and the audacious 'framing' of the scene are *japoniste* experiments of a kind pioneered by Degas and others (see introduction to this period), and are relatively new in Gauguin's work.

At first glance, there seem to be no surviving preparatory drawings for the figures. The washerwoman squatting in the background is a variant of a figure also found in *Comings and Goings (245)* and *Turin Bight (253)* and of uncertain origin (see *245*). The little boy is quite like those of *Near the Huts (249)* and *Riverside (252)*, and, again, no original drawing is known. Nor can the woman facing the spectator be linked to any one drawing.

Mixtures ■ But the study of the woman with her back to the spectator reveals a procedure increasingly followed by Gauguin in Martinique; she seems to have been born of several different sketches. There is a hasty drawing of a woman carrying a bowl in one of Gauguin's sketchbooks. On this, he has superimposed a head in a headscarf sketched elsewhere and reversed for this painting (on such reversals, see *252*, inset 'This Way or That'). The expressive position of the hand derives from yet another, quite separate sketch. If we further note that these



Head of a Woman, detail of a page of sketches. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des dessins, fonds du Musée d'Orsay. Photo: RMN.

fragments were all taken from different sketchbooks (all of them now broken up), we begin to realise how methodical was Gauguin's use of these 'documents' (see *Breton Shepherdess*, *233*, insets), which he consciously stored up for future use. Similar montages are found in the second *Turin Bight (253)*.



Hand, detail of a page of sketches. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Absence ■ Another striking case is the little cat drinking from a bowl in the middle of the path. The group of huts where the two artists lived must have been home to numerous animals to judge by the surviving pages of Martinican sketches, which are full of drawings – often exquisitely carried off – of cats in the most endearing poses. Though none of them fits the kitten in this picture, some such sketch must, it seems, have existed, since the kitten reappears not only the following year in an Arles painting, *321*, but again, ten years later, in the left-hand corner of *Where Do We Come From?*, painted in Tahiti. The present work did not follow Gauguin to Tahiti. He must therefore have used a sketch that he took with him on his various journeys. And it was not the only one to accompany him, since the goat that appears in *Where Do We Come From?* is first found in *River (246)*.



Woman Carrying Bowl, detail of a page of sketches. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

So we should note the increasing significance of these little figures, which were first snatched from Gauguin's own environment, then gradually invested with meaning as they reappeared.

The kitten also finds a place in the fan W295, while a second fan, W228, shows the innumerable possibilities afforded by Gauguin's repertory of motifs: it is a sort of variation on the elements of this painting – women, tree, rocks in the water and flowering bush are all the same – but all quite differently arranged.

[1] Huyghe, 1952 (**D**).
[2] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, early July 1887 (Merlhès 129).



Little cat, detail of *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* Boston (Massachusetts), Museum of Fine Arts.

Documents and bibliography:
This work must be one of the four Martinican paintings 'with figures' mentioned by Gauguin in the letter to Schuffenecker (second half of October 1887, Merlhès 133) cited in the introduction to the Martinique period.

F. Fénéon: 'Calendrier d'avril. VII. In the shop-windows', *La Revue indépendante*, May 1888 (J.U. Halperin: *Félix Fénéon. Oeuvres plus que complètes*, Geneva, 1970, p. 111): 'At Van Gogh's [gallery], 17 boulevard Montmartre, several new works: […] a Martinican landscape by Monsieur Gauguin: negresses in a meadow through which tumbles a stream. A general exhibition would show what a powerful and isolated artist he is'.

Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 5-8 June 1888 (Merlhès 149): 'Negresses chatting which you recently took is hanging in the balance with a lady who wanted it badly and to whom I offered it down from 500 to 400 f – She can't make up her mind'.

Vincent Van Gogh to Russell, c. 17 June 1888 (501a): 'I believe my brother has also another picture by Gauguin, which is, as I heard say, very fine: two negro women talking' [English original].

Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 23 June 1888 (Merlhès 153): 'I really wish Madame Poujin [or perhaps Pouzin or Poursin, see **P**] would make her mind up'.

Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 7-8 July 1888 (Merlhès 157): 'I received a letter from the woman who was going to buy my negresses telling me that she can't buy till January. So this is a let-down'.

Russell to Vincent Van Gogh, 22 July 1888 (501b): 'It is most good of you to give Mr. Goguin* a leg up. Not knowing the man I can't say if he deserves it. I hope so for your sake. I would like to help you. But how? There is but one legitimate way, i.e. by purchasing one of his works. The very last day in Paris I tried to fetch Boussod Valadon Cie to see the picture you speak of 'niggers etc'. but failed through want of time. For others I saw that big one of yours [*250*] unfortunately swamps them in my opinion. So I am in a fix' [English original].

Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 24 or 25 July 1888 (Merlhès 158).

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, late July 1888 (514).

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 10 or 11 September 1888 (536): 'Russell gave us a "no" about buying a Gauguin'.

List sent by Gauguin to Octave Maus in late 1888, listing the latest prices asked by Gauguin for the works to be exhibited at les XX in 1889: he wanted FF 600 for this work (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels).

Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 72: list made in preparation for the exhibition of les XX, including a '[no.] 50 [canvas] Martinique'; p. 73: definitive list: '[no.] 2 tropics [FF] 600'; p. 222: '[sold to] Lerolle (negresses chatting) [FF] 225'.

Boussod et Valadon registers (Rewald, *GBA*, 1973, p. 91): 'Negress* in Martinique, [bought from] the artist 22 June 1889 [FF] 225, – [sold to] Lerolle 18 June 1889 [FF] 300'. The fact that the sale precedes the purchase of the painting shows that this work was on deposit at the gallery.

Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, c. 1 July 1889 (Cooper GAC 14): 'herewith […] the receipt for 225 f. Although this was cheap you did well to deal at that price to Lerolle, an artist. I consider purchase by artists the best thing, since it's the right way to demonstrate [one's] talent to the public'.

H. Lerolle to O. Maus, 1904: Lerolle promises to send his Gauguin to the Brussels exhibition (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels).

Wildenstein, 1964, no. 227 (repr.).

J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, pp. 21-22, 61, note 33.

K. Pope: *Gauguin and Martinique* (doctoral thesis, University of Austin, Texas, 1981), microfilm edition, 1986, pp. 159, 161, 171.

V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, pp. 488, notes 260 and 261 (on the purchase by Mme Pouzin); 489, note 262 and 490, note 265 (on the purchase by Russell).

Exhibitions:
Added, in April 1888, along with works by Thornley, Schuffenecker, Rodin and Chéret, to the works by Gauguin, Guillaumin and Pissarro which had been on display since the previous month at Boussod et Valadon (see Fénéon, **D** above).

6e exposition des XX, Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, February 1899, no. 2: *Conversation (Tropics)*.

Exposition des peintres impressionnistes [La Libre Esthétique], Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, 1904, no. 50.

New York, Wildenstein, 1956, no. 6.

Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago, and New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1959, no. 8.

New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1966, no. 2.

Provenance:
Deposited for sale with Boussod et Valadon, Paris, c. April 1888 (see Fénéon, and Gauguin's letter of 5-8 June, both **D** above).

Attempted sale to 'Mme Poujin' (see Gauguin's letters of June and July 1888, Merlhès 149, 153, 157). Malingue (*Lettres de Gauguin à sa femme et à ses amis*, Paris, 1946, p. 133, note 1) calls her 'Mme Pouzin': she was, he says, a banker's wife who was learning painting from Schuffenecker (the commercial directories give no banker of either name); one wonders whether the name was 'Poursin', that of the owners until fairly recently of a vase (Gray 63) and a woodcut (Gray 7), which would seem to have been sold by Gauguin to the same person – see his sketchbook c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 226.

Attempt by Vincent Van Gogh between June and September 1888 to have this painting bought by John P. Russell (1858-1930 or 1931), the son of a rich Australian industrialist and a dilettante painter whom Van Gogh had met in Cormon's studio (in Merlhès, 1984, p. 474, note 242), and whom Vincent considered 'a very strong and serious man' (Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, February 1890, 625 – 'Gauguin and Russell are basically rustic people; not savages, but with a certain sweetness of the distant fields probably far more innate in them than in you and me'.) Russell was not much attracted by this plan: see letters from Vincent Van Gogh and Russell – 501a and b, 514, 536 – and Gauguin's letter of 24-25 July 1888 (Merlhès 158), all **D** above.

Bought from Boussod et Valadon, 18 June 1889 by the portraitist and history and genre painter Henry Lerolle (1848-1929) for FF 300, of which Gauguin received 225. See Boussod registers, Gauguin's letter of early July 1889 (Cooper GAC 14) and his sketchbook c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), all **D** above.

Mme H. Lerolle, Paris, c. 1934.

Mr and Mrs Robert E. Eisner, New York, c. 1956 and c. 1966.

[Edgar R. Eisner] sale, New York, Christie's, 15 May 1985, no. 20.



252

252
Riverside

Canvas. 0.54 × 0.65
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 87
W222

This scene may be set on the banks of the Turin Bight river, whose raised banks are lower than those of the nearby Latouche Bight river.

In the foreground of the painting we find a set of faintly-outlined figures. There are several things to say about them. The seated *martiniquaise* is one of the very few figures to be based not on a rapid sketch but on one of the small number of posed studies that we know; the only other examples of this are the two women in *Mangoes (250)* – see introduction to the period, inset on drawings.
But she is the result of a twofold operation: montage and reversal, since we find in her reversals not of one but of two pastels. The



Mixed-race Martinican Woman, Seated, detail of a drawing. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Head of a Martiniquaise, drawing. Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).

body is that of a *martiniquaise* with some Indian blood whom we find in a large pastel, which is here adopted with a slight variation in the position of the hand and slightly reduced in size. On this body, Gauguin placed a more Negroid face, of which aspects – the drapery of the headscarf and the angle of the head (the face is slightly altered) – were taken from a pastel that (like the painting itself) once belonged to the Van Gogh brothers: W299. This kind of superimposition was unproblematic for Gauguin, who had been practising it since 1880 and *Woman Sewing (64)*. Reversal, the second operation undergone by the pastel originals, seems to have been a more recent practice (see inset).
No preparatory drawing is known for the figure of the little boy though certain drawings may not be wholly unconnected: a tiny silhouette of a Martinican facing the other way, hands on hips, in the corner of a large pastel[1]; and a little sketch, similar but by no means identical, of the bust of a Martinican, also facing the other way, on a page that has recently appeared on the market[2]. But we note that the boy appears in outline, along with the tree trunk – slightly varied, differently arranged, and, most notably, reversed – in *Near the Huts (249)*. The ease with which Gauguin handles tree and boy in the present work suggests that this is the second version of the two motifs. At all events, the grace and freedom of the work are such that it may well have been painted towards the end of Gauguin's stay.
The elevated viewpoint and figures silhouetted against the surface of the water are carried off with greater ease and conviction than in *Bathing Place (223)*; Gauguin increasingly sought 'Japanese' effects of this kind (see introduction to the period). With the surface of the water mirror-like rather than shimmering, the composition is divided into broad zones of often pure colours, with the introduction of purplish blues producing an effect of broken harmony. All this illustrates Gauguin's progress toward a more decorative surface-effect; a useful comparison is *Bathing Place (221)* painted the previous year in Pont-Aven. The letter in which Van Gogh a year later meticulously describes the colour harmonies of this picture leads us to think that Gauguin's Martinican tones may well have fed into Van Gogh's own thinking[3].
Van Gogh gave Gauguin (one or) two of his own works in exchange for this one. At the time, Gauguin still addressed Van Gogh in his letters formally, as 'Cher Monsieur'[4]; but their rapport and mutual esteem must have been immediate, as Gauguin's choice of this very pure work testifies (see **P** below).
Two later fans adopt motifs from this painting: the boy and tree appear facing the same way but differently placed in W223, and the cow appears in W236.

[1] J. Rewald: *Gauguin Drawings*, New York, 1958, pl. 7.
[2] Kornfeld, 23 June 1989, no. 24.
[3] Vincent to Wilhelmine Van Gogh, 31 July 1888 (W5, **D**).
[4] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, December 1887, in Merlhès, *Lettres retrouvées*, 1989 (**D**).

This Way or That

Gauguin now frequently reversed his drawings. He probably did this by holding them up to the light; there is no evidence that he customarily used tracing paper. But perhaps he used less predictable methods inspired by his very fertile imagination. The use of techniques such as printing and monotype facilitates and multiplies such reversals, and makes the issue increasingly complex; establishing the chronology of the transformations undergone by a particular outline drawing is a very testing exercise.
At all events, this procedure afforded Gauguin a new liberty in the use of the figures that had accumulated in his sketchbooks or loose-leaf drawings – his 'documents for later on' – and thus made an important contribution to his repertory of available motifs. His stay in Martinique gave a powerful impulse to what was already a systematic proceeding (see *Breton Shepherdess, 233*, insets).

Documents and bibliography:

This must be one of the four paintings 'with figures' mentioned by Gauguin in a letter to Schuffenecker (October 1887, Merlhès 133, cited in the introduction to this period)
Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, December 1887 (V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, p. 56: 'Cher Monsieur, / If you come over this way you will find at Cluzel, the picture framer in rue Fontaine, a picture that I have placed there intended for you (for our exchange). Should it not suit you, tell me by coming here to choose for yourself. Pardon me if I don't come to pick up yours [*les vôtres*] I am so rarely in your part of town. I shall get them from 19 bouvd. Montmartre [the branch of Boussod et Valadon managed by Theo Van Gogh] if you would be so kind as to leave them there'.
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, c. 15 July 1888 (510), showing that the exchange involving this work took place on the occasion of the exhibition organised in November 1887 at the Grand-Bouillon restaurant, in which Van Gogh took part: 'As to the second exhibition in the hall on the boulevard de Clichy […] since Bernard sold his first painting there, Anquetin sold a study and I did a swap with Gauguin, we all got something out of it'.
Vincent to Wilhelmine Van Gogh, 31 July 1888 (W5): 'We also have a second painting by him which he swapped for a study of mine, a dried-up river bed with violet mud and pools of water reflecting a pure cobalt sky green grass a young negro with a white and red cow a negress in blue and a green grove'.
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 224: 'Vincent Negress exchange'.
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 17 January 1889 (571): some weeks after the crisis of 24 December in Arles, Van Gogh still felt some resentment towards Gauguin, and considered asking for the return of the works exchanged.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 222 (repr.).
J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, pp. 19 (repr.), 35, 61, note 33, 63, note 81.
D. Cooper: *Paul Gauguin. 45 Lettres à Vincent, Théo et Jo Van Gogh*, La Haye and Lausanne, 1983, pp. 15, 17, 26, 33, 253: the author suggests that the picture was swapped for Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, F375 and/or F376.
V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, p. 471, note 236: on the Grand-Bouillon exhibition.

V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, pp. 55-56.
V. Jirat-Wasiutynski and T. Newton: 'Tradition et innovation […]', *Actes du colloque Gauguin […] 1989*, Paris, 1991, pp. 66, 67, 69 (fig. 7: montage using infrared reflectograms of the figure of the Martinican woman).

Exhibitions:

London, Leicester Galleries, 1924, no. 48.
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 31.
Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 18.
Vincent Van Gogh en zijn Tijdegenooten, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1930, no. 155.
Paris, Orangerie, 1949, no. 4.
Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-50, no. 13.
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 29.
Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, and London, Tate Gallery, 1955, no. 16.
Palm Beach (Florida), Society of the Four Arts, 1956, no. 4.
Coral Gables (Florida), Joe and Emily Lowe Art Gallery, 1956, no. 3.
New York, Wildenstein, 1956, no. 5.
Vincent Van Gogh et ses amis, Mons, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1958, no. 88.
Les Amis de Van Gogh, Paris, Institut néerlandais, 1960, no. 38.
Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, 1970, no. 3.

Provenance:

Exchanged by Gauguin with Vincent Van Gogh in November or December 1887, very shortly after they first met; Gauguin received one or two works of Van Gogh's that had been exhibited at the Grand-Bouillon restaurant. According to D. Cooper (D above), these were the *Sunflowers* F375 and/or F376, reproduced at the portrait of Van Gogh (*326*). See Gauguin and Van Gogh's letters and Gauguin's sketchbook, D above.
Theo Van Gogh, Paris, 1890.
Johanna Van Gogh-Bonger, 1891.
V.W. Van Gogh, Laren (Holland), 1925.
Lent by V.W. Van Gogh to the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in 1930, where it remained until the creation of the Van Gogh Museum.
Vincent Van Gogh Stichting, Amsterdam, 1962; exhibited since 1973 at:
Amsterdam, Vincent Van Gogh Museum – S220 V/1962.

253
Fruit Porters at Turin Bight

Canvas. 0.46 × 0.61
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 87
W218



253

The bay of Saint-Pierre is seen from a viewpoint very close to that of *242*, which Gauguin had painted shortly after his arrival in Martinique, but this time slightly closer to the water's edge since the 'Fort' quarter of Saint-Pierre, dominated by its church, is now visible to one side of the roadstead. A question nonetheless arises whether or to what extent this slightly under-characterised landscape was painted from life. The cloud draped across the flank of Mount Pélée might be a reminiscence of the cloud in *242*. As to the trunks in the foreground, they are clearly chosen on aesthetic grounds, a selection of those that punctuate the first version of this motif.



The bay of Saint-Pierre and Le Trou rock seen from Turin Bight.

Hybridisation ■ The figures in this painting are bounded by a faint outline resulting from the transfer of drawings to the canvas and several of them can be related to Gauguin's drawings. Thus the women squatting with her back to us beside a fruit-'tray' is a variant, here clothed in red, of those who feature (dressed in blue) in *Comings and Goings (245)* and *Negresses Chatting (251)*. She is perhaps the last version of this figure, whose model, as we have seen, remains uncertain (see *245*). But this variant, leaning to the right, seems also to reflect a drawing with watercolour highlights in which a woman is likewise seen from behind, but sitting rather than squatting and leaning to the left not to the right. We know that such reversals became a common practice of Gauguin's during his Martinique period (see *Riverside*, *252*, inset). On occasion, he seems also to have combined his studies (see *Conversation*, *251*). It is therefore possible that the seated woman looking out of the painting, for whom there is no known original, is a synthesis of the *martiniquaise* holding her ankle in *254*, and a little ink sketch of a woman wearing the very same hat as this and seated in a similar position. We note in passing that a *martiniquaise* in *Comings and Goings (245)* wears the same hat. Lastly, the second woman from the right is a variant of a figure that we have already encountered in *Palms and Gourd Tree (243)*, which was probably also based on a sketch (see *243*).



Back View of Seated Martiniquaise, detail of a drawing. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Front view of seated Martiniquaise, detail of a sketch. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Surprise ■ One of the more unexpected aspects of this painting is undoubtedly its treatment. It is marked off from the other Martinican works by its lack of browns and greens, and its unmixed colours; its colour is exceptionally unified. The *japonisme* of this work has often been remarked on. It resides not only in the composition, as in the first version of the motif, but also in the simplification of the areas of flat colour; before his stay in Martinique, Gauguin had only ever attained such simplification in rather unassuming works such as the 1885 *Women Bathing, Dieppe (179)*. As early as 1906, Jamot also underlined the connection with Puvis de Chavannes[1], a master whom Gauguin never disowned. Nature seems idyllic in this scene, and, combined as it is with the *tricouleur* harmony and gentle but dazzling luminosity, might suggest the influence of works like Puvis' *Magdalene* and *White Rock* which Gauguin could have seen at Durand-Ruel's gallery. Whatever the case, this work, like *Mangoes (250)*, must have held a very special interest for the artistic community. Only the dynamic Impressionist brushwork recording the scrub at the base of the tree runs counter to the *japonisme* of the whole.

In attempting to situate this work in Gauguin's Martinican production, we remember that, in a letter to Schuffenecker written during the second week of October[2] (see introduction to this period), Gauguin claimed to have painted only four pictures with figures, whereas we know five: *249*, *250*, *251*, *252* and this work. Do the background figures in this second view of the *Turin Bight* show slight signs of being unfinished? If so, the present work may, perhaps, have been started after the letter, during the two or three weeks remaining to Gauguin before his return. Indeed, when one considers the unified treatment of the surfaces in this canvas, which did not otherwise emerge in Gauguin's work until early in the summer of 1888 in pictures such as *Haymaking (287)* and *Wrestlers (298)*, one wonders whether this second *Turin Bight* was not finished in 1888, some time later than the other Martinican works, but before its appearance in the Volpini exhibition.

The memory of the fruit porters on an ocean background inspired several later works by Gauguin and Laval: Gauguin's zincograph of early 1889 (Guérin 10, slightly reworked in the woodcut Gray 73), and a few very personal paintings, gouaches, and drawings by Laval.

[1] Jamot, 1906 (**D**).
[2] Gauguin to Schuffenecker, second week of October 1887, in V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, pp. 39-41.

Documents and bibliography:
(?) A. Retté: 'Bars et brasseries à l'Exposition', *La Vogue*, July or August 1889, p. 155: Retté speaks of the café Volpini, 'This café, then, attracts me, I confess; here the paintings of Monsieur Gauguin modulate upon the walls some exotic tone-scale […] kelp-carriers descend a pebble-strewn slope under the midday sun; the cliffs glitter, and the waves coruscate […] It's Martinique, I believe'.
Unpublished card from De Monfreid to Ernest Cros, Tuesday 17 [March 1891]: 'I spoke to Gauguin about the little Martinique painting. At very least he wants 150 f. But he'd give it to you for 125 as a very special favour. I might add that this seems something of an effort on his part: no use offering less; he'd say "bugg… ['bugg…' crossed out] nothing doing!"'
Unpublished card from D. de Monfreid to Ernest Cros, one Saturday of April 1891: 'As for Gauguin's 130 fr., you might ask Madame Cros to give them to my wife, one day when she's visiting […] Anyhow, there's no hurry' [This last remark is explained by the fact that Gauguin had already left for Tahiti].
P. Jamot: 'La Salon d'automne', *GBA*, December 1906, p. 467: 'charming "By the sea" belonging to Monsieur Ernest Cros: figures draped in pink or white walk by the blue triangle of the bay or sit beneath the tall trees. Here one grasps, I think, the link between Puvis de Chavannes and Gauguin's starting point in decorative painting'.
C. Chassé: *Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven*, Paris, 1921, pp. 69-70.
V.W. Van Gogh: 'Enkele Notities over Gauguin op Martinique', *Museum Journaal* (Otterlo), 1960, pp. 15-16 (repr.; suggests the identity of the location of this picture and that of *242*).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 218 (repr.).
K. Pope: *Gauguin and Martinique* (doctoral thesis, University of Austin, Texas, 1981), microfilm edition, 1986, pp. 140-141, 145-146, 157, fig. 114 and 116 (photos of the motif).

Exhibitions:
Retté's description (**D**) proves that this work was present at the Exposition universelle of 1889 in the Volpini café on the Champ-de-Mars, despite its absence from the catalogue. Could it have been added after the start of the exhibition?
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1906, no. 214.
Paris, Assocation Paris-Amérique latine, 1926, no. 8.
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 26 or 29 depending on the edition.
Paris, Gazette des beaux-arts, 1936, no. 17.
Paris, Orangerie, 1949, no. 5.
Paris, Charpentier, 1960, no. 30.
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental du Prieuré, 1985, no. 61.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 32 (exhibited only in Paris).

Provenance:
Bought in April 1891 for FF 130, via De Monfreid, by a childhood friend of De Monfreid's, an engineer with the Chemins de fer de l'État: Ernest Cros (see De Monfreid's cards to Cros, **D** above), who also owned *Willow* (W347). The work was still in the Cros collection in 1928.
Mme Étienne May, née Cros, Paris.
Monsieur et Mme Mathieu-Georges May, Paris.
Private collection, France, 1992.

254
Seated Martiniquaise

Canvas. 0.45 × 0.50
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 87
W235

This painting has undergone restoration, which seems to be fairly recent. The photo that we reproduce shows its original state and seems to suggest that Gauguin wanted to change the framing of the figure by eliminating two narrow bands left and bottom (following the indications provided by the dark, angular patch, which has since been painted over). We know of no study for this figure. Elements of the posture resurface in a figure in the second *Turin Bight (253)*. The entire figure can be seen, reversed, in an 1889 zincograph, *Cicadas and Ants* (Guérin 10)[1].

[1] Gauguin's title refers (though plural) to La Fontaine's fable, Bk. I, I: 'The Cicada and the Ant'. [Translator's note].

Documents and bibliography:
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 235 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Paris, Gazette des beaux-arts, 1936, no. 16.

Provenance:
Given by Gauguin to Schuffenecker (certainly his friend Émile, on whom see *148*, inset) in 1890, according to the 1935 sale catalogue below.
Reiffers, Luxembourg.
Sale, Paris, Charpentier, 14 May 1935, no. 1.
Boucheny-Bénézit, Paris.
Current whereabouts unknown.


254


255

255
Little Washerwoman

Canvas. 0.32 × 0.45
Signed lower right of the monogram according to the 1926 sale catalogue
W234

We recognise the background of this scene in a sketchy drawing showing two animals and two figures. A more detailed watercolour of the bucket is found on the back of the same page, which seems to be from a sketchbook now broken up.

Documents and bibliography:
Walter Halvorsen to Olsen (of the Svensk-Franska Konstgalleriet of Stockholm), Paris, 31 May 1918 (archives of the Svensk-Franska Konstgalleriet): 'I am sending with Monsieur Heyman the following works intended for the exhibitions of next winter […] Gauguin: […] Little washerboy* frs. 7000 […] The paintings must be sent to Sundt at Kristiania if you haven't sold them. From there they'll go into the exhibitions you are organising in Sweden and Copenhagen. You'll have to arrange things between Sundt and yourself so that all the pictures I send are seen everywhere'.
Letter from an unknown writer to Mme Druet, written from Scandinavia on 7 October 1919 (archives of the Svensk-Franska Konstgalleriet): 'I repacked the Copenhagen exhibition so as to send the paintings to their respective Paris owners […] For this purpose, I took the liberty of sending all the paintings, which, according to the list, belong to you, along with those that I suppose must belong to Monsieur Halvorsen, to your home address […] enclosed the lists of things sent […] 6779 Paul Gauguin Little Washerboy' [this 6779 is probably a Druet number].
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 234 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Exhibition touring Scandinavia, 1918-1919 (see letters, **D** above). We know of very few catalogues. This work is mentioned in only one of them, as follows: *Fransk Konst*, Göteborg (Sweden), September 1918, no. 34 (*Child Washing Clothes*, accompanied by a manuscript price indication – 9500 – inferior to that of the other works exhibited).

Provenance:
A Vizzavona photo of this work, which seems to date from before 1912, can be found in a batch of photographs that belonged to Jeanne Schuffenecker and no doubt came down to her from her uncle Amédée Schuffenecker (on whom, see *Geese in the Meadow, 184*, inset). The existence of this photo must mean that the picture was in Amédée's possession; he dealt in Gauguin's works during the first quarter of the 20th century.
Very probably: Druet, Paris, c. 1918 (see 1918 and 1919 letters, **D** above).
Sale, Paris, 20 October 1926, no. 27 (to Goldschmidt of Frankfurt).
Alfred Wolf, Stuttgart and Buenos Aires.
Sale of Alfred Wolf (deceased), London, Sotheby's, 24 April 1963, no. 5 (to the Mayor Gallery).
Private collection, Great Britain, c. 1983.


Martinican Scene, drawing. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.


Bucket, watercolour. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

256
Still Life with Mangoes and Hibiscus

Canvas. 0.325 × 0.470
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 87
W238

To the left of the hibiscus blossom lie the mangoes. The little curved 'tails' on the 'fruit' in the plate are in fact cashew nuts; the 'fruit' are their fleshy, edible stems. The bare walls and enamel plate (as in *Still Life, 257*) testify to the very austere lifestyle of the two artists.

Documents and bibliography:
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 238 (repr.).

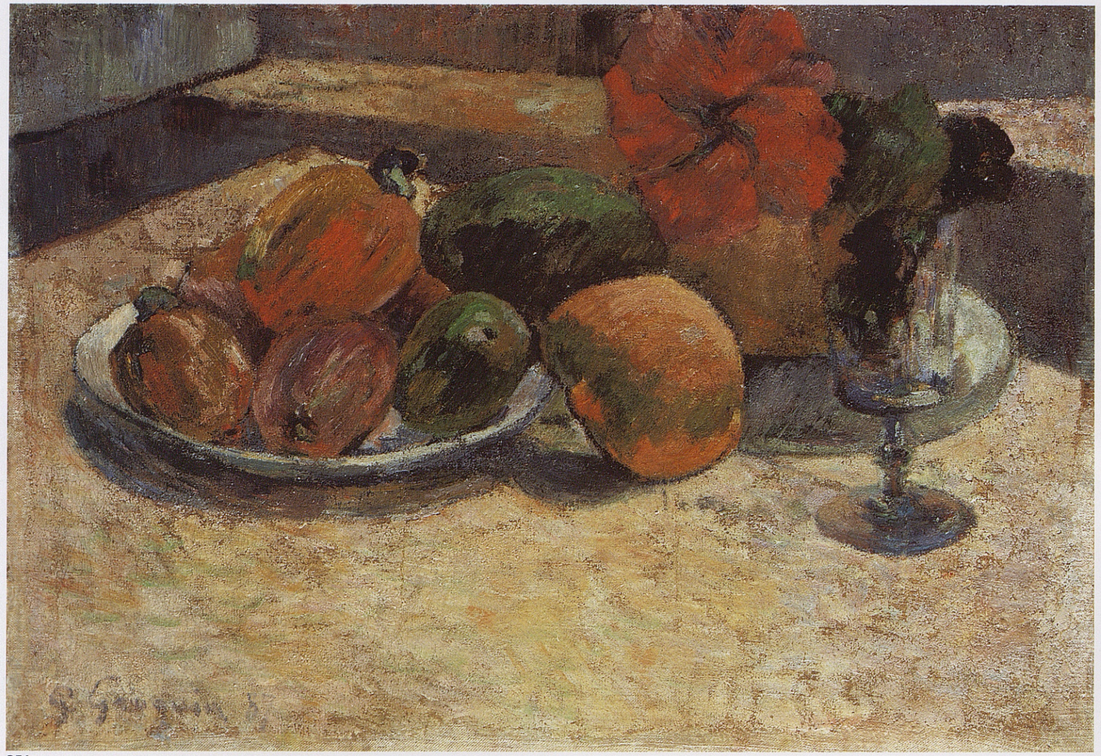
Exhibitions:
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 29 or 33 depending on the edition.
Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 19.

Provenance:
Dr. Fritz Rosenfeldt, Stuttgart
Feilchenfeldt, Zurich
Galerie Thannhauser, Munich, c. 1928, then New York (no. 40386 according to a English-language notebook).
Sale, Lucerne, Fischer, 5 June 1948, no. 2303.
Sale, London, Sotheby's, 27 June 1989, no. 16.
Private collection, Japan.

257
Still Life with Delacroix Drawing

Canvas. 0.40 × 0.30
Signed upper left: *P. G.*
W533

Lychees, peppers, lemons and cucumber lie in an enamel plate like that of *256*. The vegetables in the background (breadfruit, papaya, coconut in its green husk?) are less easy to identify. But it is clear that this arrangement, with its prevailing exotic tone, takes us, like *256*, into the hut in which the two artists lived during their stay in Martinique.



256



257



Adam and Eve, plate 40 of Robaut: *Delacroix: fac-similés des dessins et croquis originaux*, 1864-1865. Photo: BNF.



Detail of Gauguin's painting. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

The reproduction on the wall in this rudimentary shelter shows how, even at this stage, Gauguin travelled with certain images that were close to his heart and helped to keep up his spirits. It is plate 40 of volume II of *Delacroix: fac-similés de dessins et croquis originaux*, a collection published in 1864-1865 by A. Robaut to accompany his catalogue of Delacroix's works. It is a full-size reproduction of no. 852 of that catalogue, a graphite study (0.22 × 0.26) for the *Adam and Eve* pendentive in the library of the palais Bourbon. It is possible that the facsimiles were sold separately; Gauguin obviously owned several, since, the previous winter, he had borrowed from another plate in the series for a horseman ornamenting the ceramic work, Gray 16. We know from a letter of 1882[1] that Gauguin knew the palais Bourbon decorations; indeed, in *Diverses choses*[2] he did a wash drawing after a Delacroix study for another pendentive, *The Death of Seneca*.

Gauguin's borrowings from Delacroix are many; he considered him a master of unrivalled inspiration, freedom and musicality. This admiration – shared with Van Gogh – arose very early in his career. It may date from his earliest days as a painter; his guardian, Gustave Arosa, was a devotee of Delacroix and owned sixteen of his works. Gauguin often spoke of his own enthusiasm. Thus, in 1885, writing to Schuffenecker: 'I propose a swap – take a picture of mine from the Marsouin's place and send me a photo of the boat of Don Juan by Delacroix as long as it doesn't cost too much. I confess that at the moment my only moments [sic] are when I can shut myself off in the house of art. Have you noticed how this man had the temperament of a wild beast that's why he painted them so well […] his Don Juan's boat [*The Shipwreck of Don Juan*] is the hot breath of a full-blooded monster and I should love to feast on that spectacle[3]". The vivid red and yellow that stand out against the dark background of this little painting perhaps constitute a further homage to Delacroix.



E. Delacroix: *The Shipwreck of Don Juan* (Robaut 707). Paris, Musée du Louvre.

[1] Gauguin to Camille Pissarro, May-June 1882 (Merlhès 23).
[2] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 239.
[3] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, May 1885 (Merlhès 78).

Documents and bibliography:

B. Dorival: 'Le milieu', in *Paul Gauguin* (collective work), Paris, 1961, reprinted 1986, p. 44.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 533 (repr.).

Exhibitions:

Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1960, no. 63.
Vienna, Belvedere, 1960, no. 14.
Die Nabis und ihre Freunde, Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963-1964, no. 119.
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1978, no. 16.
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental du Prieuré, 1985, no. 346.
Gauguin et les peintres de la Bretagne, Japan, 1992, no. 26.
Gauguin, les XX et La Libre Esthétique, Liège, Salle Saint-Georges, 1994-1995, no. 49.
Gauguin y la escuela de Pont-Aven, Mexico, Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, 1995-1996, no. 1.

Provenance:

According to the Musée de Strasbourg, it was bought from 'Schauffenhozer' by Raymond Koechlin in 1906. Could this be a misreading of 'Schuffenecker'? On Amédée Schuffenecker, who dealt in Gauguin's works at this period, see *Geese in the Meadow, 184*, inset.
Bequeathed by Koechlin to the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Strasbourg in 1931:
Strasbourg, Musée d'Art Moderne – 55.974.0.662.

Conversation, Tropics [251], detail. ▶





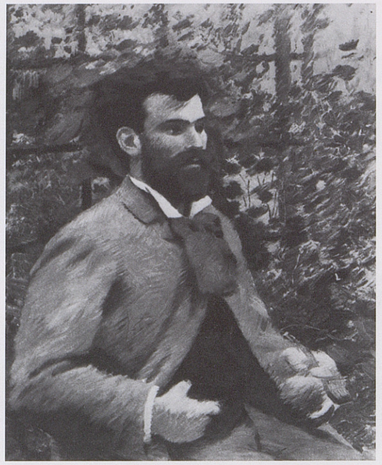
A Further Winter in Paris (November 1887-January 1888)

Refuge with a friend ■ On 14 or 15 November 1887, Gauguin arrived back in France, weakened by illness, and immediately went to stay with his old friend the painter Claude-Émile Schuffenecker (on whom see *148*, inset).
The Schuffenecker family had moved in the first quarter of 1885 to a charming little estate recently built at 29 rue Boulard, in the 14th arrondissement. Their attention had doubtless been drawn to its merits by their friend, the painter Fernand Quignon, who was one of the witnesses at the declaration of the birth of their son Paul, and was already living on this estate by 1884. He stayed there until 1888, they until 1890. (On Quignon, see introduction to the Pont-Aven campaign of 1888, and *Breton Women Chatting, 237*, **D**, letter of 25 October 1888.)
The site of the estate, longer than it was wide, formed some 2,500 m² divided into eighteen two-storey maisonettes, each with its own garden, set on either side of a little central avenue. Three bungalows and an entrance lodge were added in 1891, completing this modest and homely development, which now seems a haven of tranquillity.
For FF 400 a year the Schuffeneckers occupied a house built between 1877 and 1882 to the right of the central avenue, and fourth from the back of the development. It was a 'double-depth' house, its façade comprising two main rooms on each storey looking over the garden, and, behind the house, a tiny courtyard flanked by a little room on either side. One of these, on the ground floor, was no doubt the kitchen. There were therefore five rooms in addition to the living and dining rooms; one imagines that Gauguin was given one of the little courtyard rooms. In this house, at all events, Gauguin was lodged and fed by his friend from his arrival in Paris till his departure for Brittany on 26 January 1888.

There are very few paintings from these ten and a half weeks: one portrait, and two or three still lifes. Gauguin may have been extenuated by dysentery or malaria, or may simply have turned his attention to ceramics in preference to painting. The light, unifying stroke-work intuited in Martinique seems to have been abandoned on its shores, and these Parisian works are often more traditional in kind. So much so, in fact, that we must stop and take note. It seems that, far from abandoning experiment, Gauguin was taking a new direction, exemplified by the sharp outlines of contour and volume in the *Still Life with Fan (259)* and *Still Life with Japanese Print (260)*.

Artists in ferment ■ Gauguin was once again immersed in the intellectual and artistic activity of Paris. He was aware of the latest intellectual ferments, and in particular of the 'young rebels of the Cormon studio': Anquetin, Bernard, Van Gogh, Lautrec, and a certain Koning, who made less of a mark. Around November-December 1887, this group held an astonishing exhibition in the popular Grand-Bouillon restaurant on the corner of avenue de Clichy and rue Hélène. Anquetin and Bernard, in particular, included Cloisonniste works showing a high degree of formal simplification (one might cite Bernard's *Asnières Bridge*, Luthi 43, and *Two Women on a Footbridge*, reproduced at *Still Life with Fan, 259*), some of which also featured areas of pungent flat colour (for example, Anquetin's *Avenue de Clichy*, reproduced at *Still Life, Fête Gloanec, 301*).
Gauguin immediately recognised the worth of Vincent Van Gogh, whom he met late in 1887; on the occasion of the Grand-Bouillon exhibition, he exchanged one of his Martinican paintings (see *Riverside, 252*, **P**) for Van Gogh's

◀ *Still Life with Fan (259), detail.*



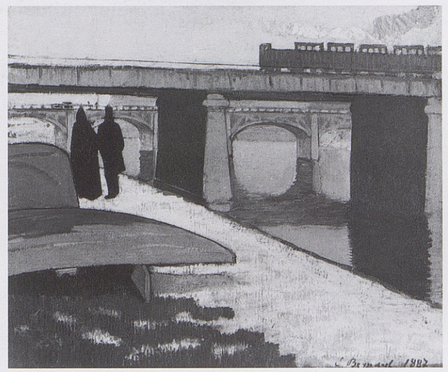
C.-É. Schuffenecker: *The Painter Fernand Quignon* (Grossvogel 444), probably painted at rue Boulard. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

striking but still analytical *Sunflowers*, F375 and/or F376. It is, moreover, possible that Van Gogh succeeded in arousing Gauguin's interest in Japanese prints, something he attempted with almost everyone (see *Still Life with Japanese Print, 260*, and *Wrestlers, 298*, inset). We do not know how carefully Gauguin followed the discussions of these young painters, but he had no truck with areas of flat colour or with simplified outlines and showed little sign of solidarity. Shortly afterwards, Van Gogh remembered how 'this winter Bernard was still trying to pick a quarrel with Gauguin[1]'.

But *Still Life with Fan* and *Still Life with Japanese Print* belong to a broader area of experiment, that of all those who sought by emphasising forms and outlining contours to escape the influence of Impressionism. Renoir had been trying to do this for several years, as had Seurat in his fashion and the Cloisonnistes in theirs. The most radical solutions did not, for now, originate with Gauguin.

Almost all this winter's paintings contain depictions of artistic works, pots, fans or Japanese prints. And each of these elements served, in some measure, as a manifesto. At very least, they suggest that this period was one in which Gauguin marked a halt in order to meditate questions of aesthetics.

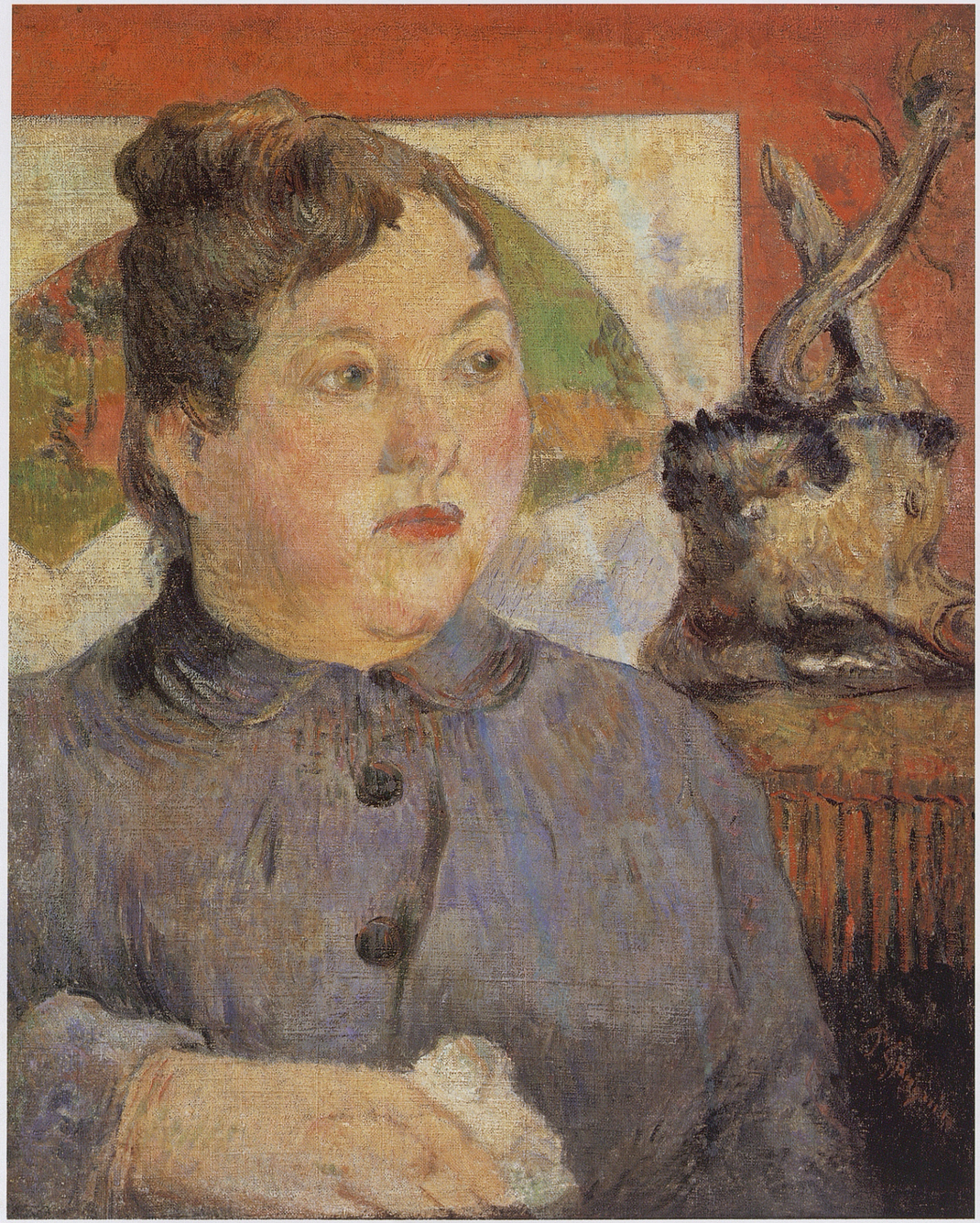
[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 17-18 September 1888 (539).



É. Bernard: *Asnières Bridge*, 1887 (Luthi 43). New York, The Museum of Modern Art.



The Schuffenecker house, rue Boulard.



258

258
Portrait of Madame Alexander Kohler

Canvas. 0.46 × 0.38
Signed lower right: *P Gauguin*
W314

Good neighbours ■ Gauguin met his model at 29 rue Boulard. The identification of Mme Kohler was noted in the catalogue of the Pédron sale and confirmed and detailed to Malingue around 1945 by Jeanne Schuffenecker. The Kohlers lived in a little rue Boulard house (see introduction to this period) built in 1877, which they were already occupying by 1885 and left in 1892. It was the fourth from the main street, on the left of the central avenue, and almost opposite the Schuffenecker's house. It was smaller than theirs; 'single depth' – meaning it had only two rooms on each storey overlooking the garden – but it got much more sun.



The Kohler house.

Noémi[1] Marie Alleaume was born in the département de L'Orne on 2 August 1854, but had been living in Paris with her mother when, on 2 October 1879, she married Joseph Alexander Kohler, who also lived with his mother in Paris; both fathers had died[2]. He was a cashier, born 13 April 1847 in Karlsruhe in the Grand Duchy of Baden; one of his uncles lived in Belfort, and his family origins seem to have been in the regions on either bank of the Rhine. Malingue notes that Kohler was working for the department store Le Bon Marché at around the time when he and the Schuffeneckers became neighbours[3]. A brother of Mme Kohler's also knew Schuffenecker[4], doubtless the tradesman Camille Alleaume, four years her elder, who had been a witness at her marriage. A letter from Gauguin shows Schuffenecker labouring on his 'Alleaume portraits', which Gauguin advised him to rush out in the most conventional manner 'with all the tricks in two sessions. A crisp smooth ground, some impasto here and there, and a glaze over the top. Taking care with the reflections on the nose and eyes[5]'.
Gauguin was scarcely more respectful but slightly more affectionate when he wrote to Schuffenecker in late 1888: 'if you see Mme Kohler tell her that in her vast breast there is a heart that beats for the fatherland that a well-brought up tortoise is seen not heard at table. Thus says Gauguin and Gauguin is a sage[6]'. The reference to Mme Kohler's patriotism and other allusions in the letter reflect the political discussions that were raging at rue Boulard as Boulangism grew ever more popular.
Gauguin gave this portrait to his model, perhaps because he liked her, perhaps in gratitude for some service or other[7]. Mme Kohler also bought a still life from him for FF 50[8]; the low price might be related to the size of the work. Perhaps it was one of the little compositions that Gauguin had brought back from Martinique, *256* and *257*. We do not know.

Consciously naïve ■ Her considerable bust buttoned up to the collar, Mme Kohler is flanked by a ceramic piece in which animal instincts seem to find very pure expression. But these carnal allusions are elegantly offset by the irreproachable pose of the model, who is haloed by the fan rather in the manner of a primitive portrait. The overall arrangement and primitivising tendency of this portrait make it identical in formula to that of *Clovis, 208*. The overly wide and slightly formless hand seems as though excluded from the composition and resting on the frame, while the canvas is divided in masterly fashion into broad, flat areas of colour, each clearly outlined (an effect carried further in the very firm outlines of the still life *259*). Mme Kohler's alert glance contrasts with her heavy figure; she is a woman of the people sat cheek-by-jowl with works of art. In combination, these factors bestow considerable refinement on the primitivism of the work.
All of the objects belonged to Gauguin and are described at *Still Life with Fan (259)*, in which they reappear. Their presence confirms that Gauguin liked to paint his own ceramic works, as he had already done in the portrait of Laval, *238*, though they also enrich the connotations of his portrait.
The identical arrangement of the objects in the two works suggests that they were painted in the same place, which cannot have been Mme Kohler's home since she did not own the pot. It was probably painted in the Schuffenecker house, the only place we know of where Gauguin could work. Neither the portrait nor the still life are dated, but both are the products of one of Gauguin's sojourns in the Schuffenecker household. That of winter 1886-1887, when Gauguin had the use of a studio in rue Lecourbe, seems less likely, especially since the ceramic piece, *Horned Rats*, was probably later. Gauguin took refuge at rue Boulard during the two following winters, and it seems likely that the pot accompanied him on his return from Arles in late 1888 (see *259*). But the experiments with Synthetism that preoccupied Gauguin in 1888 are completely absent in this portrait, whose brushwork suggests a date in winter 1887-1888.

[1] Mme Kohler's first name is anomalous; the name is conventionally spelt Noémie.
[2] Marriage register of the 7th arrondissement.
[3] Malingue, 1948 (**D**).
[4] Malingue, 1946, p. 132, note 2 (**D**).
[5] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, June 1888 (Merlhès 147).
[6] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 December 1888, in Merlhès: *Lettres retrouvées*, 1989, p. 243 (**D**).
[7] Huyghe, 1952 (**D**).
[8] Huyghe, 1952 (**D**).

Documents and bibliography:
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 226: 'Mad[e] Kohler Her portrait given'.

C. Morice: 'Art moderne. À la galerie des collectionneurs, 338 rue Saint-Honoré', *Mercure de France*, April 1904, p. 352: 'a portrait of a woman: the model is fat and soft in outline, indecisive in expression. It is this moral and muscular weakness that the painter has set himself to render'.
F.v.O. [Fritz von Ostini]: 'Französische Künstler im Münchner Kunstverein', *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 6 September 1906 (in Kropmanns, 1997, pp. 33 and 87, note 86).
A.G. Hartmann: 'Neue französische Malerei III', *Allgemeine Zeitung* (Munich), 12 September 1906: 'The portrait of Mme Kohler, round as an egg, had already been seen here some time ago' (German original, in Kropmanns, 1997, p. 83, note 57).
Spectator: 'Frankfurter Kunstschau (Die Franzosen im Kunstverein)', *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 16 October 1906 (in Kropmanns, 1997, p. 88, note 88): 'The portrait of Mme Kohler is full of life' (German original).
M. Malingue: *Lettres de Gauguin à sa femme et à ses amis*, Paris, 1946, p. 132, note 2
M. Malingue: *Gauguin*, Paris, 1948, no. 143 (repr.), cited without page number in the 'List of Plates'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 314 (repr.).
C.W. Blanton: 'Notes on a Portrait by Paul Gauguin in the Chester Dale Collection', *Report and Studies in the History of Art*, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1967, pp. 89-98 (repr.).
V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, p. 243, note 2.
P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven im Deutschland* [...], Sigmaringen, 1997, pp. 23 (repr.), 24, 33, 83, note 57, 88, note 88.

Exhibitions:

[Paintings, ceramics and sculptures,] Paris, galerie Soullier, 1904: see Morice's review, 1904, **D** above. Hartmann's review (**D**) shows that this work had already been exhibited in Munich; it may therefore have featured in the exhibition *Die Schule von Pont-Aven im Kunstverein*, Munich, Kunstverein, late summer 1904, to which many works were lent by or via Schuffenecker (see Kropmanns, 1997, p. 24).
Ausstellung Französischer Künstler, Germany 1906-1907 (Munich, Kunstverein, September 1906; Frankfurt, Kunstverein, October; Dresden, Arnold, November; Karlsruhe, Badischer Kustverein, December-January; Stuttgart, Württembergischer Kunstverein, January 1907), no. 37 (*Portrait of Frau K...*, Schuffenecker collection, for sale).
San Francisco (California), San Francisco Museum of Art, 1936, no. 7.
Cézanne, Gauguin, Toledo (Ohio), The Toledo Museum of Art, 1936, no. 8.

Provenance:

Given by Gauguin to Mme Kohler: see Gauguin's sketchbook, **D** above.
The presence of this work in a 1904 exhibition probably indicates that it had left (or possibly was about to leave) the Kohler collection.
Schuffenecker, c. 1906: see **E** above. The existence, in a batch of photos traceable to Jeanne Schuffenecker, of a large Druet-Vizzavona photo of this work, which may have been made with a view to its sale, seems to confirm that this portrait was in the hands of Amédée Schuffenecker, who dealt in Gauguin's works in the first quarter of the 20th century (on Amédée, see *Geese in the Meadow, 184*). It would not be surprising in any case if Mme Kohler or her descendants had turned to the Schuffenecker family when they sought to dispose of this work.
Léon Pédron, Le Havre.
Léon Pédron sale, Paris, Drouot, 2 June 1926, no. 23 (*Portrait of Mme Kohler*, to Dru).
Bought from Dru, Paris, by Chester Dale, New York, June 1926.
Donated by Chester Dale in 1962 to:
Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, Chester Dale Collection – 1963.10.27.

259
Still Life with Fan

Canvas. 0.50 × 0.61
Signed lower right:
P Gauguin
W377

Behind the fruit in this still life are two works that we recognise from the *Portrait of Mme Kohler (258)*. The first is an unpublished fan showing a stooping Breton woman; Gauguin must have noted down this posture during his 1886 stay in Pont-Aven (see *Winter, 265*, inset). The second, to the right of the fan, is a ceramic work of Gauguin's, which has since disappeared but is well documented, *Horned Rats*, a curious construction in which two rats' heads were crowned with the peculiar appendices clearly visible here[1]. Two heads and three horns also appear in a sketch of the vase on page 20 of the Briant album; one of the heads is fairly clearly discernable, full face, to the upper left of the vase, in the portrait of Mme Kohler.



Pot, sketch. Album Briant, p. 20, detail. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des dessins, fonds du Musée d'Orsay. Photo: RMN.

Bodelsen (**D**) is right to think that this highly original creation probably dates from the winter of 1887-1888. It can in any case be no later than the end of January 1888 when Gauguin left Paris since he speaks of it a few months later: 'When you have the time', he wrote to Schuffenecker from Arles, 'make a package with the horned pot which is at Van Gog's* and [another pot] and send them to me./ Here we are in rather a nice little house and I should like to have a bit of pottery to look at'. A letter from Vincent Van Gogh confirms the mid-November arrival of this 'magnificent pot with two rats' heads[3]'.
There must have been lots of other ceramic works at Schuffenecker's house which he could have sent directly without going to Van Gogh's house, but this is the piece that Gauguin wanted; he must have been very satisfied with it since he chose to represent it in two paintings. He had likewise depicted one of his pots the previous winter in *Still Life with Laval's Profile (238)*. It is just as well that he did since both have since disappeared. A little later, in *263*, he singled out a similarly imaginative bowl.
The picture is untypical and rather artificial in style. It must surely date from the winter of 1887-1888 as it must have been done at the same place and around the same time as the *Portrait of Mme Kohler* (see *258*). It might even be possible to specify the date still more closely if we knew when *Horned Rats* was deposited at Boussod's. Is it one of the ceramics seen by Fénéon as early as December in the gallery, two of which, he wrote, were 'of abnormal geometry and hunchbacked[4]'? Or was it part of a later deposit that left no documentary trace?



259

New references? ■ When we consider the airy lightness of certain of the Martinican paintings, the studious treatment of this composition is at the very least surprising. But rather than a relapse, it may be the product of an entirely new experiment, perhaps inspired by avant-garde reflections that Gauguin could hardly be unaware of. Should we suspect, in the firm, even outlines, the division into large areas of colour (also a feature of *Mme Kohler, 258*), and the simplified harmony of red, white and green, the influence of colour prints? This was a popular art, and one which the young pioneers who exhibited in the Grand-Bouillon restaurant considered exemplary (see inset). We know that Gauguin attended this exhibition, in which the Cloisonniste works of Bernard and Anquetin, with their continuous outlines, were represented (see introduction to this period, and inset).
Did Gauguin see Bernard's *Two Women on the Asnières Footbridge*[5] at the Grand-Bouillon: a 'naïve' picture suggestive of illustration, whose meticulous outline is not so very unlike that of this still life? We might, then, conjecture that Gauguin too, in the wake of his younger colleagues, wished to test the effect of carefully outlined volumes, without going as far as them in simplification of form.



É. Bernard: *Two Women on the Asnières Footbridge*, Brest, Musée des Beaux-Arts. Photo: Marc Jeanneteau / © C.N.M.H.S.,

It is noticeable that, in this same period, other artists were seeking solutions for painting in the field of graphic effects, though they remained more analytical and did not embrace the primitivist 'naïvety' of the Cloisonnistes. They included Lautrec, Raffaëlli, and, at times, Van Gogh, for example in the astonishing *View of Paris made from the rue Lepic room* of 1887[6].

Simple colours ■ The reduced range of colours set against areas of white is reminiscent of Images d'Épinal. But it is also akin to those of Toulouse-Lautrec's *Cirque Fernando*, which presents a very similar harmony of red, white and green set off by black; the Lautrec was no doubt painted in late 1887[7] and Gauguin may have seen it that winter (see also *Winter, 265*). On the other hand, it is just possible that these effects simply result from a study in complementaries, along the lines recommended, in particular, by Van Gogh (see the still life *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset on complementaries).
Still Life with Fan is almost the only Gauguin painting to display this unexpected



H. de Toulouse-Lautrec: *Cirque Fernando*. Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago.

manner, since the early part of 1888 found him returning to a more classical Impressionist style.

[1] As the Van Gogh letter cited below (562) attests.
[2] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 25 October 1888, in V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, pp. 126-127.
[3] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, mid-November 1887 (562).
[4] F. Fénéon: 'Calendrier de décembre 1887. Vitrines des marchands de tableaux', *La Revue indépendante*, January 1888, p. 170.
[5] Musée de Brest.
[6] Van Gogh Museum.
[7] It was exhibited at les XX in February 1888.

Popular Imagery and The New Style

In his essay on the experiments of his friend Anquetin, the critic Édouard Dujardin, who had obviously followed the discussions of the young artists in some detail, declared that Anquetin's works 'inevitably remind one of popular colour prints and *japonisme*'. This new style of painting, he said, took for its models 'primitive art and a popular art which is the continuation of the primitive into the contemporary'; he expressly cited 'imagerie d'Épinal', which works, he said, 'by outlining contours'[1].
Van Gogh seems to confirm that the little group was very interested by these rudimentary forms. He shortly afterwards spoke of naïve old country almanachs, in which 'snow, rain and sun are represented in completely primitive fashion, as Anquetin so splendidly discovered in his Harvest'[2]. We note that *Harvest* – also known as *Reaper* – was one of the works that Gauguin saw at the Grand-Bouillon.
The *Histoire de l'imagerie populaire* de Champfleury had just been republished (1886) and there were many ideas in that history likely to please artists who sought greater simplicity. '*Imagerie* [...] reveals the nature of the people. [...] That delicate flower, naivety, seemingly so difficult to pluck in modern times, will one day blossom from the archaic and barbaric[3]'.
At various points, these pioneers also admired other forms of imagery. The works of certain English illustrators were perhaps among these, as was the 'sign painting' later cited by Maurice Denis[4]. Certainly, there were inquisitive spirits who took an interest in sign-painting in the early 1880s; the author of the catalogue of the Musées du Trocadéro, Soldi, mentions it as among those little known arts whose naiveness and frank colours appealed to him (see *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset on colour).

[1] Édouard Dujardin: 'Calendrier. Aux XX et aux Indépendants: le Cloisonisme'*, *La Revue indépendante*, March 1888, pp. 487-492.
[2] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 18 June 1888 (B7).
[3] J.H. Champfleury: *Histoire de l'imagerie populaire*, Paris, 1869, p. XLVIII.
[4] M. Denis: 'L'époque du symbolisme', *GBA*, March 1934, p. 166.

Documents and bibliography:
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 377 (repr.).
M. Bodelsen: *Gauguin's Ceramics*, London, 1964, pp. 154-155 (on *Horned Rats*).
The Old Matsukata Collection. Occidental Art [catalogue of the former Matsukata Collection], Kobe, Kobe City Museum, 1990, no. 706 (repr.).

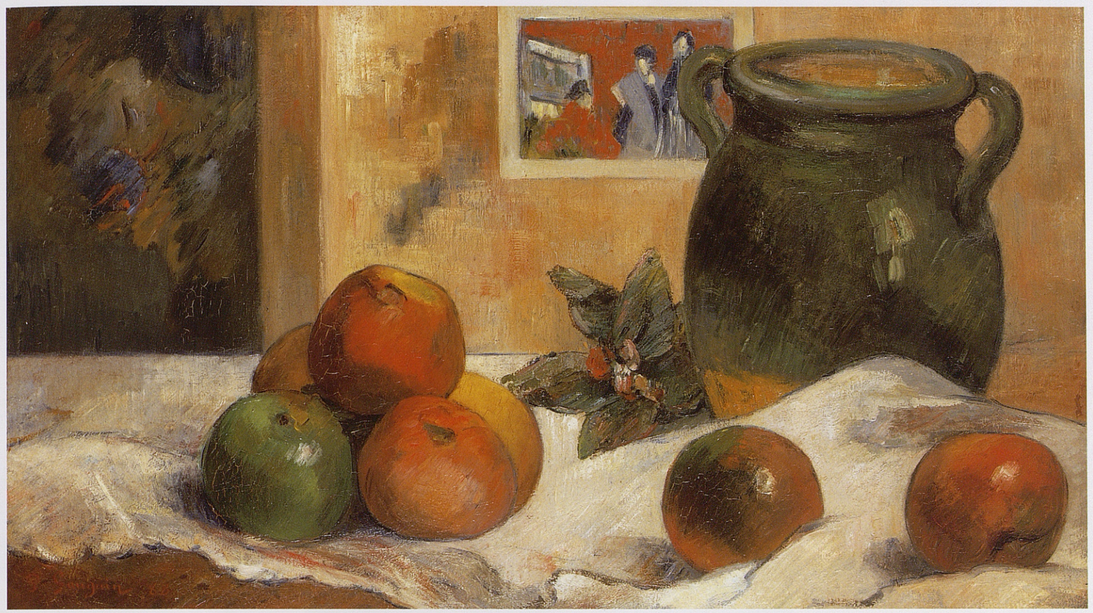
Exhibitions:
Paris, Orangerie, 1949, no. 13.
Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-1950, no. 38.
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 26.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Quimper, Musée des Beaux Arts, 1950, no. 6.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 41.

Provenance:
Kojiro Matsukata, c. 1923.
Confiscated by the French government in 1941. Entered the Musée du Louvre on application of the peace treaty with Japan in 1959; exhibited at the galeries du Jeu de Paume; transferred to the Musée d'Orsay in 1986.
Paris, Musée d'Orsay – RF 1959.7.

260
Still Life with Japanese Print

Canvas. 0.32 × 0.55
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W287

The style of this still life is such that it cannot be placed in the second half of the year. It must therefore have been painted in Paris, or just possibly in the first part of Gauguin's stay in Brittany. The remarks that follow are intended to narrow down these possibilities.
The Japanese print visible in the background can be seen the following year on a different wall, that of Schuffenecker's studio in rue Boulard, where it features on the right of Gauguin's portrait of the Schuffenecker family (W313). It may nevertheless have belonged to Gauguin, who felt quite at home in Schuffenecker's studio; in 1890, in the latter's rue Durand-Claye studio, he pinned up a series of prints by Hokusai and Utamaro (see inset).



260



Apples, Pear and Pot, 1889 (W405). Cambridge (Massachusetts), Fogg Art Museum (Donation of Walter E. Sachs).

Moreover, there is no suggestion that Schuffenecker owned any Japanese prints. But we should also remember Gauguin's habit of carrying about with him various reproductions of works he admired (see *Still Life with Delacroix Drawing, 257*), which makes it more difficult to specify the place where the present work was painted.
Now, it turns out that another painting, *Apples, Pear and Pot* (W405), which dates from 1889, was painted in the same place, in front of this same wall, which the damp seems to have stained, and also shows that same indefinable surface (painting or perhaps mirror). Here another image has replaced the Japanese print. The presence of a pear in W405 suggests the latter months of the year but Gauguin was not, in autumn 1889, living in any of the places where he had lived in 1888.
The most plausible hypothesis is ultimately the Parisian location; both still lifes could have been painted in rue Boulard one year apart, this one in early 1888, the second shortly after Gauguin's return to Paris in early 1889. The print might meanwhile have found a new home in the studio, and the pear could have remained fresh in the store room.
At all events, the notably Cézannian manner of this painting would fit easily with the winter of 1887-1888 when Gauguin also painted the *Still Life with Fan (259)*, a work more experimental than this, but of similarly firm composition and meticulous execution. In both cases, Gauguin sought a way out of Impressionism by enhancing volumes and emphasising the distinctness of contours (see introduction to this period). In this way, Gauguin yet again paid his intermittent but faithful homage to Cézanne, as he had so clearly done in works such as *Apples, Jug, Iridescent Glass (144)* and *Still Life with Laval's Profile (238)* or a landscape such as *Haystack (315)*.

Displaying the print ■ But this 1888 painting has the further merit of providing one of the very first proofs of Gauguin's direct interest in Japanese prints. This



Kunichika: *Kabuki Actors*, c. 1870, diptych similar to the one on the wall in the picture. Collection of galerie Jan and Hélène Lühl, Paris.

Gauguin's Prints

From this point on, Japanese prints accompanied Gauguin till his dying day. In 1889, his room at Le Pouldu was decorated with Utamaro prints[1]; on his return to Paris, he pinned up in Schuffenecker's rue Durand-Claye studio a 'frieze made of juxtaposed Hokusai and Utamaro prints' (he clearly owned a certain number), along with 'curious original Japanese drawings[2]'. They went with him to rue Vercingétorix in 1894[3], and even to the Marquesas, where he showed his Utamaros to Monsieur Grelet, a Swiss industrialist who had settled there, telling him of the awe in which he held them[4]. There too he attached works by Toyokuni III to the boards and flyleaf of *Avant et après*. Portraits of actors by Toyokuni III can also be found in the background of the still life reproduced in the 1964 catalogue as W380[5] and in W375: details of these will be given in their place.
Segalen is said to have salvaged certain of Gauguin's prints after his death.
Gauguin frequently expressed the reverence he felt for Japanese artists, notably in *Avant et après* and *Diverses choses* (he pasted Japanese drawings cut from albums into the latter). He admired the 'forthright draughtsmanship' of the Japanese[6], and this *franchise*, in his own term, fed strongly into the stylisations of Synthetism (see *The Vision, 308*). The Toyokuni III print glued into the manuscript of *Avant et après* was published only in black and white; its astounding colours are revealed opposite. The vivid, frank and sometimes deep colours of these prints have faded since, but were then quite recent; they must have been a huge encouragement to the Pont-Aven pioneers in their experiments of summer 1888 (see still life *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset on colour)[7].

[1] H. Bidou: 'Au jour le jour. Paul Gauguin', *Le Journal des Débats*, 4 September 1903, p. 1.
[2] J. de Rotonchamp: *Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1906, p. 77.
[3] J. Leclercq: 'Exposition de Paul Gauguin', *Mercure de France*, January 1895, p. 121.
[4] P. Borel: 'Une canaque de sang royal…', *Paris-Soir*, 28 July 1939.
[5] The ascription of ownership given there is incorrect.
[6] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 231.
[7] We should like to thank the galerie Jan and Hélène Lühl for their kind help in identifying Gauguin's prints.



Kunisada (Toyokuni III): *Oiran out walking of a spring evening, in the pleasure quarter of Yoshiwara*, 1858. Collection of galerie Jan et Hélène Lühl, Paris.

interest seems not to have been fully aroused in 1886 (see *Still Life with Horse's Head, 216*) but he gave formal notice of it in July (see *Wrestlers, 298*).
Was this interest finally awoken by the Grand-Bouillon artists (see introduction to this period)? Certainly, Van Gogh had included in their group exhibition a sort of Japanese 'manifesto': the portrait of *père* Tanguy in front of a wall studded with prints[1]. We know, too, that Gauguin already felt considerable esteem for Van Gogh.



V. Van Gogh: *Portrait of Père Tanguy*, 1887 (F363). Paris, Musée Rodin.

Thus, before he left Paris in late January 1888, Gauguin had already purchased some Japanese prints. They could then be obtained cheaply and easily from Hayashi, Sichel, Wakai or Bing's; Van Gogh made a point of directing his friends to the latter. The print in this picture seems to be a diptych, whose red background identifies it as being by Kunichika or one of his circle. This red appeared in the background of Japanese prints only around the 1860s, thanks to aniline imported from the West. So there may be a certain poetic justice in its appearance on Gauguin's brushes; the oriental use of aniline may have been part of Gauguin's inspiration when he painted the revolutionary red *aplats* of *Fête Gloanec (301)* and the *Vision (308)*.

[1] According to B. Welsh-Ovcharov in the catalogue of the exhibition *Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism*, Toronto (Ontario), 1981, p. 108.

Documents and bibliography:
Georg to Oskar Reinhart, 7 May 1912 (Museum Oskar Reinhart am Römerholz archives): announces Georg's purchase at Druet's of an 1888 still life by Gauguin, with a little sketch of the work.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 287 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
(?) *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, London, Grafton Galleries, November 1910-January 1911, no. 38 (*Still Life*, belonging to Druet).
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 30 or 34, depending on the edition.
Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1960, no. 37.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1966, no. 13.

Provenance:
Druet, Paris.
Bought from Druet by Georg Reinhart, Winterthur, May 1912.
Ursula Dubs-Reinhart, Küsnacht (Switzerland), c. 1987.
Private collection, Switzerland.



Still Life with Japanese Print (260), detail. ▶



A Return to Pont-Aven 1 (January-August 1888)

Finding himself 'without studio or model', Gauguin left Paris for Brittany on 26 January 1888. He had resolved to 'work for 7-8 months on end soaking up the character of the people and the country, which is essential if you want to paint anything good[1]'. He again put up at the auberge Gloanec (see *White Tablecloth, 217*).

The Pont-Aven to which he returned was no longer the same. Most of the carefree art students had returned to Paris, the tourists had left, and women were few and far between. Gauguin had still not recovered from the dysentery and malaria he had contracted in Martinique and led an austere existence: 'Since I got here, I've been in bed almost all the time […] alone in an inn-room from morning to night, the silence is absolute. Not a soul to discuss things with[2]'. His time was spent looking into his own soul: '3 days out of 6 in bed with little taste for work and suffering horribly […] I'm getting lazy, I just go on living in dumb contemplation of nature wholly wrapped up in my art, the only road to salvation'. Then, all of a sudden: 'I love Brittany: the savage and the primitive are here. When my clogs clatter on the granite I hear the strong dull sound I seek in painting[3]'.

A land from the remote past

These are the essential words, and they were inspired by the very particular atmosphere of Brittany. The advances in transport and tourism of the 1860s had made only superficial inroads into the archaic state of the province. 'I don't know what's become of Brittany since the rail network has been thrown across it and it's been linked up to Paris by the trade in foodstuffs', wrote Maxime du Camp in the early 1880s, speaking of the Breton trek that he and Flaubert had made. 'In 1847, it was nothing more than a land of absolute contrast [with all that surrounded it]. [The neighbouring *départements*] were rich, fertile regions where the *langue d'oïl* was understood; but as soon as we entered the truly Breton Brittany […] it felt like a primitive region […] scrawny cattle, childish agriculture, dilapidated villages, heedlessness, superstition, and penury […]. It was grim, harsh, abandoned and awkward, but there was a vigour and youth that other parts of France have lost[4]'. It was this atmosphere that struck Maupassant in the early 1880s. For him, it was a 'proud, wild region still shrouded in superstition': 'One has only to set foot there to live the life of times gone by[5]'.

Gauguin was in the right place to seek the 'savagery' and 'primitive' mood to which he was increasingly devoted. His Pont-Aven campaign lasted nine months, but August marked a stylistic transformation so abrupt that we have opted to present the stay in two parts.

A period of latency

The first twenty-seven weeks of Gauguin's stay were only moderately productive. Thirty-four landscapes or figure-paintings resulted, along with the occasional still life. Illness and bad weather combined to stop Gauguin painting almost completely around March, and in June he was still complaining of fatigue: 'I'm getting my health back only very slowly[6]', he reported, 'when the heat came, my fever returned[7]'. Only in July were things much improved: 'In short, I'm recovering bit by bit and my strength is coming back', he told Schuffenecker[8], while he noted in a letter to Van Gogh that he was beginning to recover 'the freedom of his faculties; my illness had weakened me[9]'.

There is some truth in this: the stylistic freedom that Gauguin had achieved in Martinique and even the tendency

◀ *Breton Woman with Pitcher (267)*, detail.



Primitive Brittany. Old postcard.

to experiment so deeply enrooted in his nature gave way during the first part of his stay in Pont-Aven to a form of Impressionism not infrequently rather traditional. Gauguin produced a fair number of simple landscape 'studies' in which not a single living figure is present to transform 'study' into 'picture' (on these notions, see *Breton Shepherdess, 233*, inset on compositions). The 'classical' brushwork of works such as *268*, *269*, *270*, *276*, *277* and *283* often resembles that of Gauguin's 1886 Pont-Aven campaign. It is as if Gauguin simply allowed his paintings to find their own manner, moving without system between daring works such as the wintry *Breton Woman with Pitcher (267)* and the much more traditional *Dogs Running through a Field (282)*, and taking up whenever it suited him a Pointilliste manner (for example, in *Spring, 279*) or the kind of Japanese layouts that he had first attempted in Martinique, and which now found their place in works such as *White River (285)*. Just occasionally the 'synthetic' treatment to which he had come close in Martinique reappears (see *Breton and Calf, 273*). This was a period of vacillation and retreat, prior to the revolutions of the summer.

Perhaps the mood of contemplation that Gauguin described in February was of assistance to him in 'soaking up the character of the people and the country[10]'; at all events, certain of his works are wonderfully evocative of the long, dark Breton winter, and the miracle of its spring.

The relief of dialogue

Then, in July, came *Wrestlers (298)*, declaring Gauguin's fierce resolve to attain a new stylistic freedom. His renewed energy was clearly one factor in this; but no less important, he was no longer working in complete solitude. He could now rely on an increasingly invigorating correspondence with Van Gogh. Van Gogh believed in 'the absolute necessity of a new art of colour, of drawing – of artistic life[11]' and sought confederates on every side: 'The paintings to be made […] exceed the powers of an isolated individual; therefore they will probably be created by groups of men working together to realize a common idea[12]'. Gauguin felt the same, and he too had 'many things to say to [Van Gogh] from an artistic point of view[13]'.

Alas, we shall never know everything that they said. Merlhès notes that Van Gogh wrote nine letters to Gauguin before mid-August. None of these has survived, though their tenor can be inferred from Van Gogh's letters to other correspondents. Two of Gauguin's five letters to Van Gogh of

this same period have survived. But the remarks Gauguin made about theory during the month of July give us a glimpse of this heady exchange, which continued to bear fruit during the period that followed.

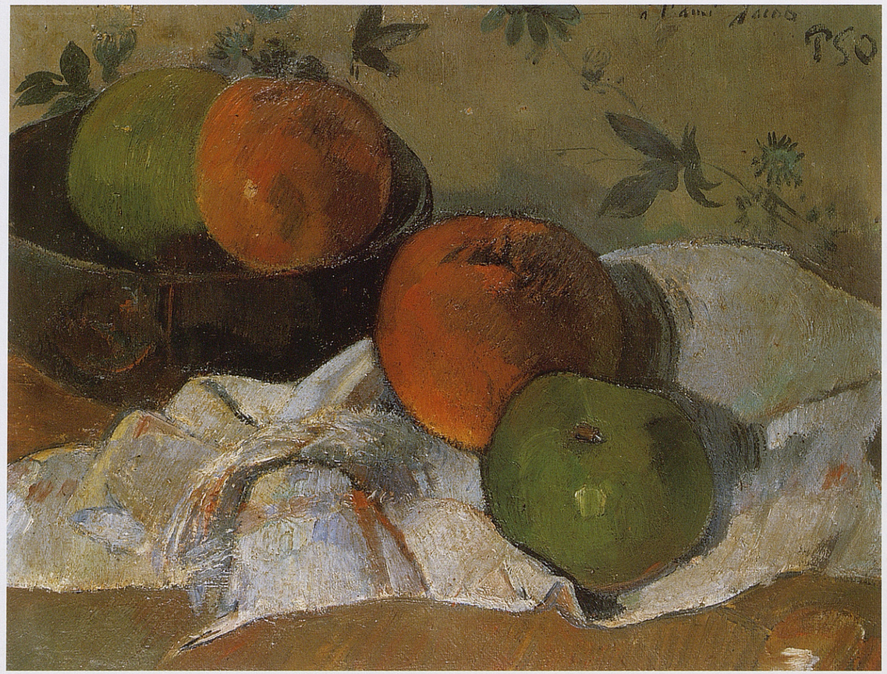
The quest for meaning

Early that summer, Gauguin finally attempted more ambitious compositions. Curiously enough, *Round Dance of the Breton Girls (296), Young Breton Bathers (297)* and *Wrestlers (298)* all have children as their subject. Was this nostalgia for the family life he had left behind? Or was it something much simpler, the ease with which young models could be obtained? Whatever the reason, Gauguin found in the world of rural childhood a first means of expression for the 'primitive' naivety that he sought in Brittany; this is especially clear in *Wrestlers*.

Moreover, ideas were surfacing in some of these pictures, not only in *Wrestlers*, but in the *Little Breton Bather (295)* with his pointed ears, who whispers to us about the animality of human nature – the 'savagery' articulated in other, later works. Even before the ambitious, programmatic paintings of the period that followed, Gauguin's own train of thought, implicit in *Two Women Bathing (241)*, was emerging.

In Martinique, Gauguin had laid in a store of little sketches. There is no trace of a similar harvest from his second Brittany campaign. On the other hand, we know that Gauguin had brought with him, in expectation of putting them to work, not only his 1886 sketchbook but some large 1886 studies with pastel highlights and even a watercolour. From the sketchbook he took a little cow, used in a view of the Aven (*269*), the spire of the church in *Haymaking (287)*, and probably a sheep in *Path Down (278)*. Some of the figures in *Breton Women at the Turn (271)* and perhaps *Autumn (313)* derive from the studies, and the watercolour served for *Breton Woman with Pitcher (267)*. But it seems clear that Gauguin also made some studies for his figure compositions and portraits of 1888 and in many cases we cannot follow the commentators who have allocated to 1886 drawings made in preparation for 1888 compositions.

[1] Gauguin to Mette, c. 22 January 1888 (Merlhès 139).
[2] Gauguin to Mette, February 1888 (Merlhès 140).
[3] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 20 February 1888 (Merlhès 141).
[4] M. Du Camp: *Souvenirs littéraires*, 1882-1883, reprinted Paris, 1984, pp. 60-61.
[5] G. de Maupassant: 'Le pays des Korrigans', *Le Gaulois*, 10 December 1880.
[6] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 5-8 June 1888 (Merlhès 149).
[7] Gauguin to Mette, mid/late June (Merlhès 154).
[8] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 8 July 1888 (Merlhès 156).
[9] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 24-25 July 1888 (Merlhès 158).
[10] Gauguin to Mette, 22 January (Merlhès 139); the 'contemplation' is described in the letter to Émile Schuffenecker, 20 February 1888 (Merlhès 141).
[11] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 14 March 1888 (469).
[12] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 6 June 1888 (B6).
[13] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 5-8 June 1888 (Merlhès 149).



261

261
Apples and Bowl

Oil on cardboard. 0.27 × 0.35
Signed and dedicated upper right:
a l'ami Jacob / PGO
W291

The Jacob of the dedication is surely the *Capitaine Jacob* portrayed in *306* and not Jacob Meijer De Haan (Gauguin is not known to have called the latter by his first name). The dedication can only have been inscribed during one of the Pont-Aven campaigns, and no earlier than 1888 when Gauguin first met the Captain. It therefore seems likely that this little work was painted in Pont-Aven in which case its rather traditional manner might place it in the first part of Gauguin's 1888 stay. The *PGo* signature seems first to appear early in the summer of 1888 (see *Cottages, 266*, inset), but the signature here may have been added later.

On the back of the painting there is sketched the portrait of a young woman dressed in pink on a yellow background; it is, indeed, so sketchy as to make dating problematic. The colours are more 'harmonic' than those of the *recto* still life (on 'harmonic' colours, see the Arles painting, *Blue Trees, 319*, inset), and may suggest a later date, perhaps from the Tahitian period. If so, the still life was dedicated to Jacob during Gauguin's last stay in Pont-Aven, in 1894, a point consistent with the *S*-like capital *G* of the signature, but which remains entirely hypothetical.



Back of *261*.

Documents and bibliography:
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 291 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 32 or 36 (depending on the edition).
Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 22.
Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 39.

Provenance:
Given by Gauguin to Captain Jacob, perhaps in 1888.
Bernheim-Jeune, Paris.
Sold by Bernheim-Jeune to Thannhauser, Germany, 23 February 1909.
Dr A. Hahnloser, Winterthur, c. 1928.
Professor Hans Hahnloser, Berne.
Private collection, Switzerland.

262
Bouquet of Flowers Against the Sea

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.92
W292

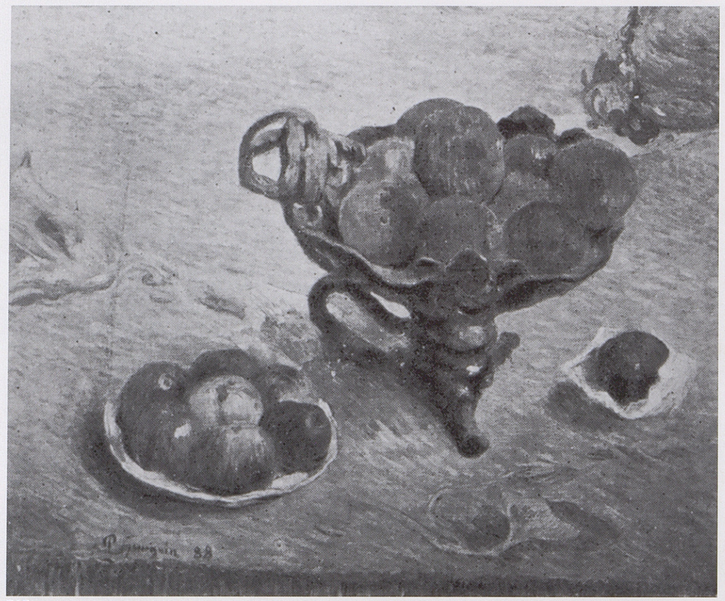
This bouquet must have been painted early in the summer, as indicated by the still rather Impressionistic brushwork and the presence of poppies (which flower June-July). On the back of the canvas is more finished work, whose more 'synthetic' manner suggests a date in July: *Haymaking (287)*. We know that Gauguin was low on materials that summer and a number of canvases were painted on both sides (see *Haymaking, 287*). The bouquet looks unfinished. It is quite possible that Gauguin gave it up and then sacrificed it, having lost interest in its Impressionist manner at a time when his stylistic experiments were acquiring a new energy. The same thing happened to *White River (285)*.
But where should we situate this still life, which shows the same window as the portrait *292*? It seems to suggest an excursion down to the coast or the mouth of the Aven; the seascapes *288*, *289*, *303*, and *310* were painted on similar expeditions. The depiction of the window from exactly the same angle is nevertheless surprising. Perhaps one of these works draws on the other. Is it possible that the window, with its peculiarly stiff-looking frame, was itself not real but a *trompe-l'oeil* of some kind (see *292*)?

Documents and bibliography:
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 292 (repr.).

Provenance:
See entry for *Haymaking (287)*, the painting on the other side of the canvas.
Paris, Musée d'Orsay – RF 1941.28.



262



263

263
Still Life with Fruit Bowl

Canvas. 0.47 × 0.55 (unverified)
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W289

The appearance of this canvas is known to us only from its reproduction in the catalogue of the 1917 exhibition, and its dimensions only from that of 1893 (whose accuracy is far from exemplary).
It shows an extant ceramic work, Gray 50, of which Bodelsen (1994, D) reproduces a photograph taken from the same angle. It is a stoneware bowl measuring 30 cm in height and in diameter, and was made during the winter of 1887-1888. Gauguin was presumably satisfied with it, since he took it as the main subject of this still life; *Still Life with Laval's Profile (238)* and *Still Life with Fan (259)* similarly record the existence of particularly innovative ceramic pieces. So far as one can tell, Gauguin has here left out the figure (inspired by the skinnier of the *Two Women Bathing, 241*) fixed to the upper handle of the bowl.

We do not know whether this pot followed Gauguin to Brittany or Arles (we know that the *Horned Rat* pot followed him at least to Arles, see *259*) or whether this picture was painted in Paris, either in January 1888 before his departure, or after his return on 26 or 27 December of that year.



Bowl with Bathing Woman (from Bodelsen, 1964).

The quality of the reproduction makes it impossible to decide on stylistic grounds whether the painting dates from early or late 1888; the most one could say is that the work possesses a dynamism notably lacking in the other paintings from early in that year. There are indistinct pale shapes on the table lower right and middle left, which are possibly plant motifs. Should we see in them an echo of the transparent motifs decorating the tablecloth of *Little Dogs (311)*? There is some analogy with the composition of *Fruits (312)*, though we do not know which came first.

Documents and bibliography:
M. Bodelsen: 'Gauguin's Bathing Girl', *The Burlington Magazine*, May 1959, pp. 186-188 (repr.): on the bowl and other works taking up the motif of the bathing woman.
M. Bodelsen: *Gauguin's Ceramics*, London, 1964, p. 87: on the bowl and other works taking up the motif of the bathing woman; reproduction of the pot, fig. 65.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 289 (repr.).
V. Jirat-Wasiutynksi: *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1975), microfilm version, 1993, p. 140.

Exhibitions:
Den Frie Udstilling, Copenhagen, Free Exhibitions Building, 1893, no. 145: *Still Life*. 1888 – H. 18 B. 21 (in Danish inches). The catalogue contains a hand-written annotation: '80 [crowns] H. Heilbuth', indicating the sale of this work to the collector Heilbuth.
Copenhagen, Kleis, 1917, no. 10: *Still Life*. 1888 – collection Herm. Heilbuth, (repr.).
Gauguin og Van Gogh i København i 1893, Charlottenlund, Ordrupgaard, 1984, no. 26 (not exhibited).

Provenance:
Bought from Mette Gauguin by H. Heilbuth, Copenhagen, during the 1893 exhibition (see E above). It still belonged to him in 1917 (see E above).
Current whereabouts unknown.



264

264
Pont-Aven in the Snow

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.92
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 88
W248

This view is from the foot of Mount Sainte-Marguerite in the valley crossed by the Riec-sur-Belon road. The two cottages visible, right background, could be those depicted in *Pont-Aven, Winter (265)*.
The subject and brushwork definitely make this work one of the first of the Pont-Aven campaign – one of the two no. 30 canvases that were among a group of paintings 'almost all finished' when Gauguin wrote to Schuffenecker on 20 February[1]. We know that that there were several snowfalls in the month after his arrival in Pont-Aven. Lorient, thirty kilometres away, suffered a very light fall on 30 January and much heavier falls between 16 and 26 February.

[1] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 20 February 1888 (Merlhès 141, D).

Documents and bibliography:
Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 20 February 1888, Merlhès 141: 'I work when I'm on my feet; I've four paintings on the go and two no. 50s and two no. 30s almost all finished'.
Very probably: Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (Rewald, *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): among the no. 30 canvases, a 'Snow Effect [FF] 300'.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
(?) Vollard Archives, receipt dated 9 January 1895: 'At the end of next February I shall pay to Monsieur Paul Gauguin or his [partner?] the sum of four hundred francs against merchandise received in kind/ Guillaumin no. 20 canvas, Gauguin snow and landscape in portrait format, canvases which were on deposit with me/ Paris, 9 January 1895/ Vollard 27 rue Laffitte. Paid'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 248 (repr.).
J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, pp. 49, 78.

Exhibitions:
Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22 February, prior to the sale on 23 February: Huret's article (D above) shows that, to the informed public, these events were equivalent to exhibitions.
Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group, London, Tate Gallery, 1966, no. 6.

Provenance:
Very probably: deposited with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890 (see list, D above).
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 18 (bought in by Gauguin for FF 240) – the inscription 'No. 18 Effet de Neige' is still visible on the stretcher.
This may be the same 'snow effect' deposited with Vollard, which Vollard bought from Gauguin with two other works, for FF 400, in January 1895, see receipt, D above.
Bought (in Paris?) by Pontus Furstenberg, c. 1896. Bequeathed by Furstenberg in 1902 to:
Göteborg (Sweden), Göteborgs Konstmuseum – F 29.

265
Pont-Aven, Winter, with Boy and Firewood-Gatherer

Canvas. 0.89 × 1.16
Signed and dated lower left:
88 P. Gauguin
W256

These cottages on the side of Mount Sainte-Marguerite, not far from the Riec-sur-Belon road, may be those visible in the right-hand background of *Pont-Aven in the Snow (264)*. This must be one of the no. 50 canvases forming part of a group of paintings that Gauguin described as 'almost finished' in his letter to Schuffenecker of 20 February 1888[1]. The second is unknown, and since we cannot know whether Gauguin ever finished it, it has not been catalogued. Merlhès suggests identifying it with the no. 50 landscape 'with pigs on the road' inventoried by Boussod in 1890[2], but that painting seems more likely to be the 1886 *Landscape with Swine (229)*.
We do not know of any study for the boy, though one of the sketchbooks[3] contains a drawing showing some slight resemblance to the figure here; it is much less posed and forms part of a series made in 1886 of a young Breton boy. The stooped figure of the firewood-gatherer marks the first appearance in a Gauguin painting of this posture which was to become a cliché of the Pont-Aven school (see inset).
One study of the woman is known to us, a large drawing in charcoal and pastel, which also shows her leaning to the right.



265

It is almost identical in outline – though the *coiffe* is somewhat simpler – and of the same size as the figure in the painting: as the study bears traces of having been squared up, we can be sure that this was indeed the one transferred to the canvas. The study has often been attributed to 1886 but there seems no obvious reason for this; the technique used is not the same as that of the large pastels used for *Breton Women Chatting (237)*. True, the lack of detail might also be explained by the speed with which the study was drawn, since the pose is too uncomfortable to hold for long.

Close-up ■ The hand of the Breton woman is astonishingly large; it fills the corner of the picture and prefigures the exaggerated hands and feet of *Round Dance (296)* and *Wrestlers (298)*. One inspiration for these enlarged dimensions at the edge of the painting may have been Toulouse-Lautrec's *Cirque Fernando* in which a horse's rump of heroic proportions is similarly placed. Gauguin may have seen this work before his departure for Brittany: see the entry for *Still Life with Fan (259)* opposite which the *Cirque* is reproduced.
The distortion of space in *Cirque Fernando* is, however, comprehensive, and perhaps owes something to Caillebotte's dramatic foreshortening (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset), whereas in this landscape only the scale of the figures is exaggerated: the Breton woman (herself excessively large relative to her companion) and her companion, who contrasts with the tiny peasant in the background. The slenderness of the latter was perhaps influenced by the distant figures found in Japanese prints; one example among many is the *Plum Trees in Blossom* by Hiroshige of which Van Gogh had made a copy. Such minuscule figures soon afterwards reappeared in the view of the Aven, *300*.
As to the little boy, he reappears in the fan W257 and, with some modifications, in *Swineherd (302)*. *266* is a variant of this work.



Breton Woman Bending Over, drawing. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

[1] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 20 February 1888 (Merlhès 141, D).
[2] Merlhès, 1989 (D).
[3] Gauguin's sketchbook c. 1884-1886, Cogniat-Rewald, 1962, p. 37.

Documents and bibliography:
Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 20 February 1888 (Merlhès 141): 'I work when I'm on my feet; I've four paintings on the go and two no. 50s and two no. 30s almost all finished'.
(?) Gauguin to Émile Bernard, 3rd week of November 1888 (Merlhès 182): 'Were you unable to transport the frame [for the?] no. 50 canvas?'
(?) Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, early December 1888 (Merlhès 187): 'You haven't yet received the big picture that Bernard sent'.
(?) Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 72: in a preliminary list of the works that Gauguin wished to exhibit at les XX in February 1889, there appears a '[no.] 50 Brittany' that he must have failed to exhibit, since it does not appear in the catalogue of the exhibition. This painting might equally be the hypothetical second no. 50 canvas mentioned in the letter of 20 February (see commentary and Merlhès 141, above), or a work from 1886 such as *229*, *231* or *234*; another possible candidate is the lost *Presbytery (228)*.
(?) Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, spring 1889 (Malingue LXXVII): among the canvases that he was thinking of including in the Volpini exhibition, Gauguin mentions: '2. The big Breton with the little boy in blue (no. 30 canvas)'. No known work matches this description. It would therefore seem to be an unknown work painted in 1888, since Gauguin did not return to Brittany before the end of May 1889. This solitary mention seems, however, insufficient evidence for cataloguing the painting thus described among the unknown works. The 'no. 30 canvas' is surprising, since this was Gauguin's standard format; almost all the works that he planned to include in the Volpini exhibition, with the exception of *Mangoes (250)*, which immediately precedes this description – are no. 30 canvases, and for none of them is this fact recorded. One therefore wonders whether Malingue read the figures right, and whether Gauguin did not in fact write 'no. 50 canvas', which would lead to the further supposition that the word 'landscape' was omitted either by Gauguin in his letter or by Malingue in its transcription. If so, the description 'large Breton [land-

Bent Down

The position of the firewood-gatherer here is one that had been glorified by Millet in *Women Gleaning* and taken up by Seurat in a little picture of 1886 (Hauke 60). It recurs in Gauguin's view of the Aven (*269*) and – just barely sketched in – in the middle ground (right) of *Dogs Running through a Field (282)*. Thereafter it figures in a variety of works by Bernard, Van Gogh and Gauguin: see *Human Misery (317)*.

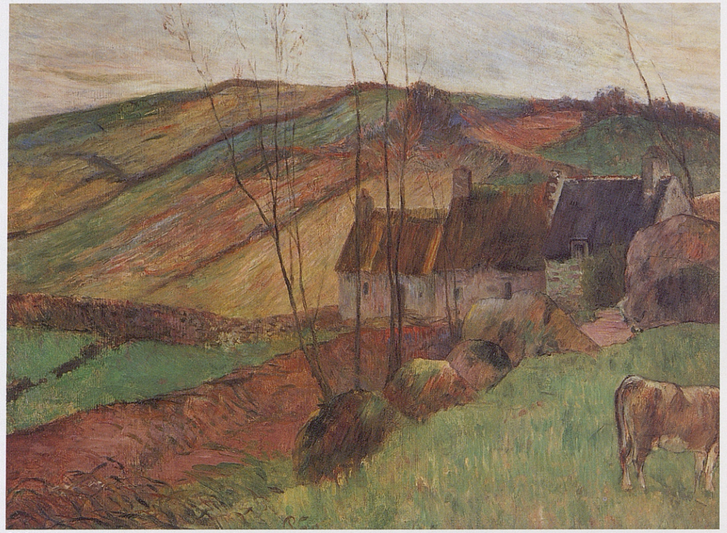


G. Seurat: *Peasant Women Working* (Hauke 60). New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

Gauguin himself had been interested in the posture since 1886. Breton women reaching down in this fashion ornament a vase from the winter of 1886-1887 (Gray 38) and a fan represented in a still life from the following winter, *259*. These two figures lean to the left, so there is some ground for thinking that, in 1886, Gauguin made a drawing – since lost – of a Breton woman leaning to the left.
Martinique produced very few such bent-over figures. But Gauguin returned to the subject soon after in *273*, where a young Breton boy is seen adjusting his clog. In his case, of course, Gauguin could not rely on the visual effect produced by a *coiffe*.



Detail of the fan represented in *259*. Paris, Musée d'Orsay.



266

scape] with little boy in blue' might fit the present work, which might, accordingly, have featured in the Volpini exhibition as no. 47, *Landscape, Pont Aven*.
Hand-written list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drawn up in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): among the no. 50 canvases: 'Landscape hills with boy blue shirt [FF] 600'.
B. Dorival: 'Le milieu', in a collective work: *Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1961, reprinted 1986, pp. 49-50.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 256 (repr.).
V. Jirat-Wasiutynksi: *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1975), microfilm version, 1993, p. 127.
V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, p. 63, note 1.
The Old Matsukata Collection. Occidental Art [catalogue of the former Matsukata collection], Kobe, Kobe City Museum, 1990, no. 702 (repr.).

Exhibitions:

(?) *Peintures du groupe impressionniste et synthétiste*, Paris, Exposition universelle, Volpini premises on the Champ-de-Mars, summer 1889, no. 47 (*Landscape, Pont Aven*), see letter to Schuffenecker, **D** above.
Paris, Orangerie, 1949, no. 9.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Quimper, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 4.
Tokyo, National Museum of Modern Art, and Aichi, Prefectural Art Museum, 1987, no. 24.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 42 (exhibited in Washington and Chicago only).

Provenance:

This might well be the no. 50 that Bernard was responsible for delivering to Boussod in late 1888; see letters, **D** above.
At all events, deposited for sale with Boussod, c. 1890; see Boussod and Valadon list, **D** above.
Druet, Paris: a Japanese source indicates that this painting bore the stock number 4570. At all events, the painting matches the Druet-Vizzavona photo no. 2785; these two elements confirm its presence in France early in the 20th century.
Kojiro Matsukata.

Sequestrated by the French government in 1944 as an enemy asset.
Returned to Japan in 1959.
Tokyo, National Museum of Western Art – P. 1959 – 105.

266
Cottages on Mount Sainte-Marguerite

Oil on wood. 0.47 × 0.63
Signed lower centre: *P Go*

Rather than a preparatory study, this painting is a repeat of *265*, which it simplifies in certain respects, notably in the arrangement of the trees; there is also a slight blurring of focus. As so often, it is the earlier study that gives a greater sense of reality (see *Quarries, 86*, inset). This panel must have been made specifically for the dining room of the pension Gloanec, perhaps very early in the summer, since the first '*P Go*' signatures seem to occur around then (see inset). The cow cropped by the frame is an effect first encountered in 1886 in *Riverbank (209)*.

Documents and bibliography:

Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 224: 'Gloanec three panels given'; for the other two, see the still lifes *217* and *301*.
C. Chassé: *Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven*, Paris, 1921, p. 62, note 2: Chassé reports the words of the engraver Paul-Émile Colin who often met Gauguin while staying in Brittany in 1890: 'At Pont-Aven, we often met at the hotel of old Marie (whose name was Marie Gweneck, wasn't it?) […]

'P Go'

Strangely enough, the monogram *'P Go'* first appears on pots during the winter of 1886-1887. Perhaps it was easier to write *'P Go'* clearly in the clay than Gauguin's entire name. There is no sign of it in paintings before early summer 1888; the portrait *290* is still signed *'PG'*. And this condensed formula seems still better suited to the first overtly Synthetist paintings, such as *Captain Jacob (306)* or *Breton Woman and Goose (307)*.
The phonetic spelling no doubt derives from Volapük, a 'universal language' that preceded Esperanto. It was invented in 1879 and reached the height of its influence in 1889 when there were twenty-three Volapük newspapers and three hundred Volapükclubs attempting to spread its use. Gauguin was willing to countenance such abbreviations; as early as 1886 we find a 'Bordeaux' address noted as 'Bordo' in one of his sketchbooks (see *Bordeaux Harbour, 213*). He also abbreviated the word 'veau' to 'vo' in his notebook of c. 1888-1890 (see *Shepherd and Shepherdess, 280*, **D**), and called the last dog he owned at Atuana 'Pégau', a homophone of this signature (*PGo/P Gau[guin]*)[1].
The monogram soon acquired emblematic status: Gauguin wanted it engraved on copper plate decorating the frame of *Human Misery (317)*[2].

[1] P. Bompard: *Ma mission aux Marquises*, Paris, 1962, p. 87.
[2] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 December 1888, in V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, pp. 238-243.



267

The main room was decorated with little panels by painters who had stayed there. Gauguin was represented by two panels very different from what he was then doing, but very well painted; one of them showed cherries [*217*], the other a landscape with a cow. Only three-quarters of the back could be seen, the rest was cut off by the frame. He showed me them himself and savoured my astonishment in silence with a broad grin'.

Provenance:

Given by the artist to Marie-Jeanne Gloanec (see Gauguin's sketchbook, **D** above). On the inn and its collection, see still life *217*, commentary and inset.
Philip Geld, New York, c. 1961.
Sale, Paris, Galliera, 10 June 1963, no. 27.
Private collection, Switzerland.

267
Breton Woman with Pitcher

Canvas. 0.92 × 0.72
Signed and dated lower left: *P Gauguin 88*
W254

It is difficult to know where in Pont-Aven Gauguin found this group of houses. But the overall atmosphere and the state of the plants all bespeak winter, and so we may suppose that this very original work is one of the two no. 30 canvases mentioned in the letter of 20 February cited below. The glowing red of the bushes on the left is not necessarily autumnal; it may be an exaggeration, or it may have been dictated by aesthetic motives, like the bright red of the Breton woman's skirt, which was blue in the first version of this figure. Allowing for a few variants, she is the right-hand figure from *Breton Women Chatting (237)* of 1886.

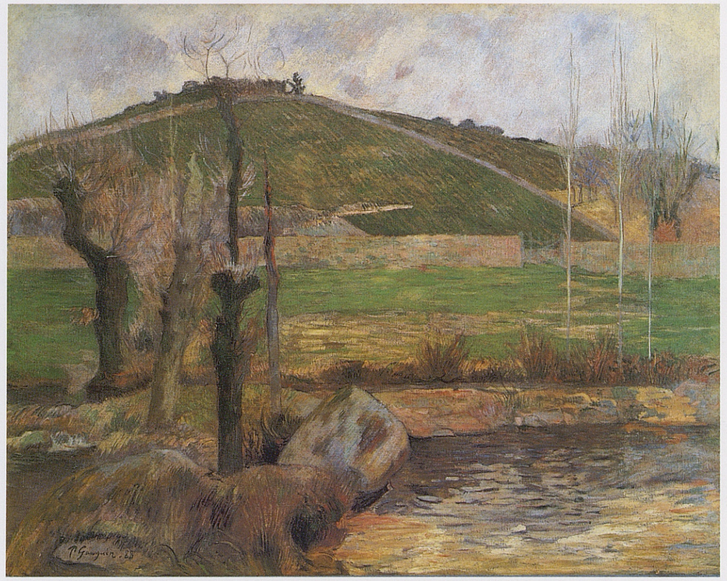
She was not, however, borrowed directly from that picture, which was at this point on deposit with Boussod. The same woman had already appeared on a pot (Gray 18) and in a little sketch[1] of too summary a kind to have served as the source for this work. A watercolour seems to have been the intermediary stage. The watercolour figure shares her *coiffe* and neckscarf with the right-hand woman of *Breton Women Chatting*, while the position of her arm and the simplification of her dress are shared with the present picture. Gauguin had presumably brought the



Bust of a Breton woman in profile, watercolour. Current whereabouts unknown. Photo: Étude Blache.

watercolour to Pont-Aven along with his 1886 drawings when he returned in early 1888 (on these studies, see the introduction to this period). The *coiffe* common to both watercolour and *Breton Women Chatting* is here replaced by a complicated and harmonious arrangement for which no drawing is known. The very individual space of the painting in some measure prefigures that of *Flageolet Player* (W361).

[1] Album Briant, département des Arts graphiques du Louvre, fonds du Musée d'Orsay, p. 21.



268

Documents and bibliography:

Very probably: Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 20 February 1888 (Merlhès 141): 'I work when I'm on my feet; I've four paintings on the go and two no. 50s and two no. 30s almost all finished'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 254 (repr.).
V. Jirat-Wasiutynksi: *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1975), microfilm version, 1993, p. 127.

Exhibitions:

Copenhagen, Kleis, 1917, no. 29.
Palm Beach (Florida), Society of the Four Arts, 1956, no. 6.
Coral Gables (Florida), Joe and Emily Lowe Art Gallery, 1956, no. 5.
New York, Wildenstein, 1956, no. 9.
Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group, London, Tate Gallery, 1966, no. 7.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1966, no. 7.

Provenance:

Tetzen-Lund, Copenhagen, c. 1917.
Charles Laurent, Paris.
Thérèse A. Laurent, Paris.
Stavros S. Niarchos, 1951.

268
River Aven below Mount Sainte-Marguerite

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.92
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin. 88
W261

The base of Mount Sainte-Marguerite is seen from the Aven at the Bois d'Amour, a little upstream of the Moulin Neuf. Since the whole area is now densely wooded and a large cannery occupies the meadows at the foot of the hill, this site now bears a very different aspect. It may be relevant that two views of the *Seine at Port-Villez* by Monet (D. Wildenstein, 1003 and 1004) exhibit very similar compositions, dominated by a breast-shaped hill, and one of these may have been on show at Durand-Ruel's gallery during 1886.
The season seems to be late winter or early spring.

Documents and bibliography:

(?) J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Ishibashi Collection, Paris, 1962, p. 42.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 261 (repr.).
(?) J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 78 (on the Chavasse collection).
The Old Matsukata Collection. Occidental Art [catalogue of the former Matsukata collection], Kobe, Kobe City Museum, 1990, no. 697.

Exhibitions:

If this is indeed the painting from the Gauguin sale of 23 February 1891, it was shown at Boussod until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot Sunday 22 February before the sale. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events were equivalent to exhibitions.
Masterpieces of the Matsukata Collection, Osaka, 1922, no. 30.
According to a Japanese source: Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 24 (*Landscape with tree*).
Tokyo, National Museum of Modern Art, and Aichi, Prefectural Art Museum, 1987, no. 27.

Provenance:

(?) Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 30 (*River Landscape*, 350 f to Jules Chavasse).
Chavasse lived at 41 quai de Bosc, Sète, staying in a hotel on boulevard Malesherbes when he came to Paris (Vollard Archives, address book). In 1891, he purchased four works by Gauguin: in the same sale, *Wave (303)*; from Boussod, *Turkeys* (see *283*) and *Green Christ* (W328). He seems to have sold them again quite soon afterwards: *Green Christ* in 1893 and *Wave* in 1897.
Galerie Thannhauser, Lucerne, according to a Japanese source.
Galerie Arnot, according to a Japanese source.
Kojiro Matsukata, Kobe (Japan), c. 1922 (see **E** above).
Jûgo Bank (The 15 Bank), Tokyo, 1927.
Shojiro Ishibashi, Tokyo, c. 1952.
Donated to the Ishibashi Foundation in 1961: **Tokyo, Bridgestone Museum of Art, Ishibashi Foundation – WP-37 (BMA).**

269
River Aven, Upstream of Pont-Aven

Canvas. 0.605 × 0.735
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W260

This view was painted in the same place as *268*, this time on a little grassy island or peninsula. Two light carts are passing on the Bannalec road. The cow set in this landscape is faithfully copied from a sketch made in 1886 in a sketchbook that Gauguin must therefore have brought back to Pont-Aven in 1888[1]. There is also a figure reaching forward and down, like the one in *Pont-Aven, Winter (265)*, q.v. inset. The grassy foreground, swirling water and the right-hand Breton woman reappear in the fan W257.

[1] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1884-1886 (Cogniat-Rewald, 1962), p. 99.



269

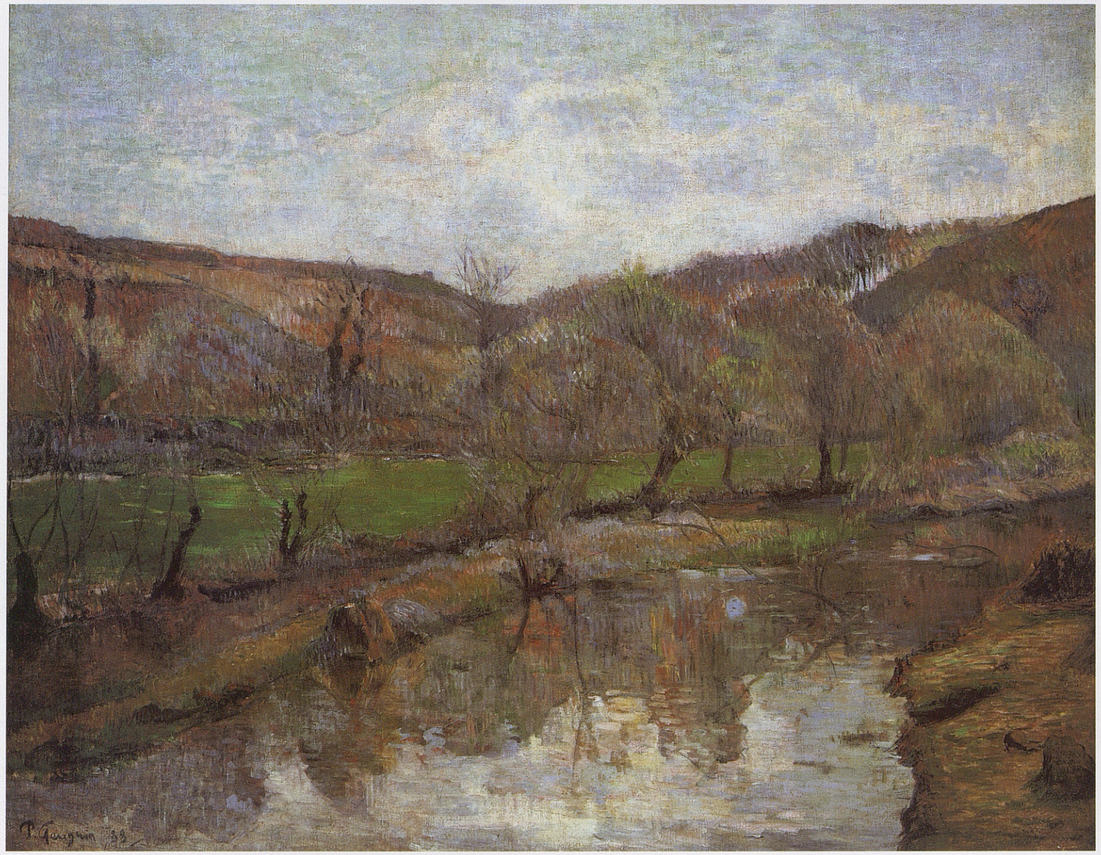
Documents and bibliography:
Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): among the no. 20 canvases, a 'Winter landscape with river [valued at FF] 300'.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 260 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
Perhaps: *Oktober-Ausstellung*, Basel, Kunsthalle, 1913, no. 48: *Breton Landscape (the Hillock)*, for sale.
Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-1950, no. 15, *Little Stream at Pont-Aven.*
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 32, *Little Stream at Pont-Aven.*

Provenance:
On deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, see list, **D** above.
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 27: *Little Stream (Pont-Aven)*, to Alexandre Natanson, FF 250. This identification is hypothetical, but seems the more plausible in that the work was exhibited under this title in 1949 and 1950. Is the title perhaps inscribed on the back of the canvas?
Galerie Bollag, Zurich.
Galerie Rosengart, Lucerne.
Frau Dr M. Rottman, Soleure (Switzerland).
Ernest Albert Ditisheim, La-Chaux-de-Fonds (Switzerland), c. 1949.
Fritz and Peter Nathan, Zurich, c. 1972.
Mrs H.A. Polak-Schwarz, Amsterdam.
Sale, London, Sotheby's, 7 April 1976, no. 9 (to Dr Ibrahim).
Dr Toufik R. Ibrahim, Madrid.
Sale, New York, Sotheby's, 14 May 1985, no. 32.

270
Aven Valley, Upstream of Pont-Aven

Canvas. 0.710 × 0.895
Signed and dated lower left:
P. Gauguin 88



270



The site in recent times.

This view was clearly painted towards the end of the winter, a little beyond the first bend in the Aven upstream of the site of *268* and *269*. But Gauguin this time looked downstream, that is, to the west. In the background, to the right, we see the hillside close to the château du Plessis. This area is today very wild and heavily wooded, but there are still willows growing in similar fashion by the water's edge. Pont-Aven, which offered a great variety of motifs within a small compass, is two kilometres away. It was unusual at this period for Gauguin to go so far afield, and to paint in so solitary a place.

Exhibitions:
(?) *Vincent Van Gogh und Paul Gauguin*, Munich, galerie W. Zimmerman, April-March 1908, no. 19: *Pont-Aven Landscape* [in P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven im Deutschland* […], Sigmaringen, 1997, p. 40: p. 91, note 128, Kropmanns notes that, according to Uhde-Bernays: 'Rundschau. München', *Monatsheften für Kunstwissenschaft*, 1908, no. 3, p. 203, the pictures of this exhibition belonged to Schuffenecker and certain of them had already been exhibited at Mannheim and Berlin].

Provenance:
Schuffenecker.
Galerie Allard, Paris.
Purchased from Galerie Allard by Chester Dale, New York, 1926.
Donated in 1962 to:
Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, Chester Dale Collection – 1963.10.148.

271
Breton Women at the Turn

Canvas. 0.91 × 0.72
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 88
W252



271



Pont-Aven Woman, drawing.
Private collection.
Photo: Durand-Ruel Archives.

The season is late winter or early spring, judging by the scanty vegetation. The landscape is not easy to situate exactly, though the women wear the Pont-Aven costume. A little sketch of the second profile illustrating the corner of a letter sent by Gauguin to Schuffenecker in late April or early May 1888 appears to confirm this dating[1], since it was probably suggested by a recent work.
We know no preliminary drawing for this face, nor indeed for the animals, though the monumental figure in the foreground was taken from a large pastel which seems to date from 1886 since it is very like those that

Gauguin used for *Breton Women Chatting (237)*. We know that Gauguin had his large drawings and sketchbook of 1886 with him in 1888 (see introduction to this period).
Fonsmark notes[2] that, under infra-red examination, a blue painted outline is revealed beneath the current subject. This shows that Gauguin eliminated a second dog and raised the height of the *coiffes*.
The animals' paths converge across the diverging upward and downward tiers of the picture space (which is somewhat reminiscent of *Pont-Aven Woman, 222*, of 1886), while the display of *coiffes* – more intricate than in *Breton Women Chatting* – is contrasted with a play of shadows prefiguring that of a later work such as the Arles road, *323*. The road is pink, like that of Osny in the 1883 painting, *102*, the path in *Late Winter (273)* and many other areas of exposed soil in Gauguin's work.
In an 1889 zincograph (Guérin 4), Gauguin combined one of the *coiffes* from *Breton Women Chatting* with that of the second profile here, though in the zincograph it is, of course, reversed.

[1] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, early May 1888, in V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, p. 64.
[2] In the catalogue of the exhibition *Chefs-d'œuvre de la Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek*, Paris, Musée d'Orsay, 1995, no. 31.

Documents and bibliography:

(?) List of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon in 1890: cf. *The Way Up (272)*, which is another possible candidate.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, including *Breton Women and Calf*, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
H. Haüser: 'Ein dänischer Sammler' [Tetzen-Lund], *Der Cicerone*, 1918, pp. 164 (repr.), 166.
M. Bodelsen: 'The Missing Link in Gauguin's Cloisonism', *GBA*, May-June 1959, pp. 334, 335, 338 (repr.).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 252 (repr.).
V. Jirat-Wasiutynski: 'Paul Gauguin and Edgar Allan Poe's "Philosophy of Composition"', *RACAR*, no. 1, vol. I, 1974, p. 62.

Exhibitions:

Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (D above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
Copenhagen, Kleis, 1917, no. 32.
Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen, 1926, no. 11
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 37 or 41 (depending on the edition).
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1948, no. 34.

Provenance:

(?) On deposit for sale at Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, unless this was *The Way Up (272)*, q.v.
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 20 in the sale, no. 21 in the auctioneer's book (*Breton Women and Calf*, 270 f to M. Magnin, 7 rue de Laborde). This is Julien Magnin, a friend of Vuillard and Roussel, who died in 1905.
Tetzen-Lund, Copenhagen, c. 1917.
Helge Jacobsen, Copenhagen, c. 1918.
Donated by Helge Jacobsen in 1927 to:
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek – I.N. 1826.

272
The Way Up

Canvas. 0.96 × 0.81

We know this work only through a photograph.

Documents and bibliography:

Perhaps: Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49). Among the no. 30 canvases: 'Winter landscape, road with bottom of hill and houses [valued FF] 400'. True, the present work is a no. 40, but the precision of the measurements in the list is not guaranteed, and the description, since it mentions no figures, suits this work better than *271*, the only other candidate.



272



273

Exhibitions:

Hommage à Paul Signac et ses amis: Paris, Salon des indépendants, 1955, no. 21bis.
Paris, Charpentier, 1960, no. 62.

Provenance:

Perhaps: on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890 (see list, D above).
Raphaël Gérard, Paris.
Mme Armstrong, c. 1960.
Private collection.

273
Late Winter, Pont-Aven, Breton and Calf

Canvas. 0.905 × 0.710
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W258



Pont-Aven seen from Mount Saint-Guénolé, detail of an old postcard.

Gauguin often referred to this work as 'Winter'[1], though, given that the boughs are beginning to flower, it may well have been painted in or around March. The view is from the flank of Mount Saint-Guénolé; just below, a path crosses the picture diagonally, partly hidden by the bushes. The upper slopes of the bois d'Amour are visible above the church spire. It was possible to locate the site by examining the rooflines in an enlargement of the old photograph reproduced here, which was taken in roughly the same place though a little further from the church. The tree-cover is nowadays much denser.

Is this calf derived from a similar but not identical sketch made two years before in a sketch-book that Gauguin brought back with him to Pont-Aven[2]? The point is by no means proven. Infra-red examination[3] shows that, in the first sketch of the animal, it still had its head. Gauguin may have felt that it was too close to the figure of the boy. At all events, this truncated body, head buried in the brush, is more surprising than that of the cows 'cropped' by the frame in *Riverbank (209)* of 1886 or *Cottages (266)*. The figure of the Breton boy was modelled by a young Pont-Avennois seated on a stool; the charcoal and pastel study was copied directly into the painting. It is often dated 1886, but there seems no reason why it should not be contemporary with the painting. The pose perhaps echoes certain Degas pictures of ballet dancers putting on their shoes, and confirms Gauguin's renewed interest in stooping and bending postures (see *Winter, 265*, inset). In two Breton scenes from 1899, W346 and W347, we find figures similarly adjusting their clogs, though standing rather than sitting.

Infra-red examination also shows[4] that Gauguin brushed in a detailed outline of the subject in blue before filling in the colours; in places, the paint is very thinly applied. The picture has, in any case, a slightly unfinished look about it, and, among the works of the early part of Gauguin's stay, it is certainly the most reminiscent of the decorative surfaces of certain Martinican paintings. The almost complete lack of modulation in the expanses of green and brown field foreshadows the almost systematic use of areas of flat colour adopted by Gauguin after Bernard's arrival in August.



Little Breton Boy Adjusting His Clog, drawing. Paris, Musée des Arts africains et océaniens.

[1] In his sketchbook and his letter to Émile Schuffenecker of spring 1889, see also the Boussod list of 1890 (all D).
[2] Gauguin's sketchbook, 1884-1886 (Cogniat-Rewald, 1962), p. 108.
[3] See A.-B. Fonsmark, in the catalogue of the exhibition *Chefs-d'œuvre de la Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek*, Paris, Musée d'Orsay, 1995, no. 30.
[4] See A.-B. Fonsmark, in the catalogue of the exhibition *Chefs-d'œuvre de la Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek*, Paris, Musée d'Orsay, 1995, no. 30.

Documents and bibliography:

Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), pp. 72 and 73, lists made in preparation for the exhibition of les XX, due to take place in February 1889 – p. 72, first list: '[no.] 30 [canvas] winter (upright [format])'; p. 73, definitive list: '[no.] 4 breton and calf winter [FF] 500'.
List sent by Gauguin to Octave Maus in late 1888, indicating the prices asked for works that were to appear in the exhibition of les XX (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): Gauguin wanted FF 500 for this painting.
O. Maus: 'Les Salon des XX, à Bruxelles', *La Cravache*, 2 March 1889, p. 1: 'I humbly confess my admiration for Monsieur Gauguin, one of the subtlest colourists with whom I am acquainted, and, of all painters, the least given to the usual tricks'. Maus cites *Breton and Calf* among 'the most enchanting' works.
Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, spring 1889 (Malingue LXXVII): among the works intended for the Volpini exhibition, Gauguin cites '4. Winter (little Breton boy adjusting his clog with village in background)'.
Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49) – among the no. 30 canvases, we find: 'Winter landscape with boy and calf [FF] 400'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 258 (repr.).

Exhibitions:

6e exposition des XX, Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, February 1889, no. 4 (*Breton and Calf*).
Peintures du groupe impressionniste et synthétiste, Paris, Exposition universelle, Volpini café, Champ-de-Mars, summer 1889, no. 34 (*Winter – Brittany*).
Fransk Malerkunst, Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, 1914, no. 101.
Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen, 1926, no. 7.
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 33 or 37 (depending on the edition).
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1948, no. 33.

Provenance:

On deposit for sale at Boussod et Valadon, Paris, c. 1890; see 1890 list, D above.
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 1 (*Winter landscape*, FF 265 to Monsieur Morot, 22 rue de Provence).
Nelly Eriksen, Copenhagen.
Purchased from Eriksen by the Statens Museum for Kunst of Copenhagen in 1912.
Deposited with the Glyptotek in 1915.
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek – SMK 3142.



274

274
Goose Games

Canvas. 0.730 × 0.915
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin. 88
W277

This is the title the work bore at the Gauguin sale of 1891. The picture is a rather surprising study of reflections, clearly painted during the first weeks of spring. The site is the right bank of the Aven, very close to the Moulin Neuf. In the background, we see the foot of Mount Sainte-Marguerite (more clearly visible in *268* and *269*) and a meadow now occupied by a factory. The low wall running along the left bank still stands.

The two Breton women in the landscape may derive from two sketches of washerwomen in similar poses, which were made in the sketchbook that Gauguin used two years before[1] during his first stay in Brittany; we know for a fact that Gauguin brought this sketchbook back to Pont-Aven in 1888 (see introduction to this period).
We know of no sketches for the geese.



The Aven at Moulin-Neuf.

However, the one amid the reflections in the middle of the canvas, with body in left profile and head turned to the right, may have its original in a lost 1886 drawing, since a very similar goose (walking rather than swimming) had already appeared in the decoration of a vase made during the winter of 1886-1887[2], which is itself akin to a sketch in the Album Briant[3].
The grooming goose is treated here in the spirit of Impressionism but reappears looking back over its shoulder in a number of subsequent drawings and paintings, taking on an increasingly emblematic character. On birds in Gauguin's work, see *To Make a Bouquet (62)*, inset, and *Breton Women Chatting (237)*, inset. This painting was probably in Gauguin's mind in the summer of 1888 when he painted *307*, and in 1889 when he drew a study of water[4] in which

there is a goose not dissimilar to the one on the right in the present work.

[1] Gauguin's sketchbook, 1884-1886 (Cogniat-Rewald, 1962), pp. 18 – there reversed – and 32.
[2] Sale, London, Sotheby's, 29 January 1988, no. 106.
[3] Musée du Louvre, département des Arts graphiques, fonds du Musée d'Orsay, p. 25.
[4] Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 15 May 1984, no. 37.

Documents and bibliography:
Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49) – among the no. 30 canvases: 'Geese playing on the water [valued FF] 300'.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Vollard Archives, sales register 1894-1897, entry for 5 December 1894: 'Monsieur Bauchy (Café des Variétés) owes 1 Gauguin picture (Goose Games) [FF] 350'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 277 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
Gauguin et ses amis, Paris, Gazette des beaux-arts, 1934, no. 49.
Paris, Gazette des beaux-arts, 1936, no. 53.
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1978, no number.

Provenance:
On deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890; see list, **D** above.
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 9: *Goose Games*, to Monsieur Thomas, 43 boulevard Malesherbes, FF 260 (this is the dealer Georges Thomas).
Bought from Vollard by Bauchy, 5 December 1894, FF 350; see Vollard register, **D** above.
Sale, Paris, Drouot, 8 June 1909, no. 19 (*Landscape, Brittany:* [*the geese*] – 0.72 × 0.92, signed lower right).
Olivier Senn, Paris, c. 1934.
Mrs Frank Jay Gould, Cannes.
Mrs Gould sale, New York, Sotheby's, 24 April 1985, no. 42.
Sale, London, Sotheby's, 27 November 1988, no. 44.



275

275
Breton Fishermen

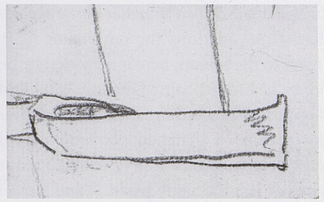
Canvas. 0.725 × 0.600
Signed and dated lower centre-left:
P Gauguin 88
W262

This view of the Aven valley is from a spot a little upstream of the site represented in *268* and *269*, at a bend of the river below the Plessis mill, looking east-north-east. In the background, to the right, we see a cart making its way toward Pont-Aven on the Bannalec road. Plant-cover is dense here, today, and the bank in the foreground (the right bank) is given over to fish-farming.

Documents and bibliography:
Boussod et Valadon register (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p.91): 'Breton fishermen, 60 × 73, [bought from] the artist 4-12-88 [FF] 250 [sold to] Clapisson 4-12-88 [FF] 400'.
Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 18-20 December 1888 (Merlhès 192): 'As to Mr Clapisson I'm not surprised that it was difficult to conclude the business with him, I know what financiers are like!'
'Revue des ventes', *Le Journal des arts*, 2 May 1894, p. 3.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 262 (repr.).
F. Bergot: 'La donation F. Depeaux au Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen', in *Arts, objets d'art, collections*, collective work, Paris, 1987, p. 207 (on the Depeaux collection).

Exhibitions:
Ausstellung französischer Kunst, Leipzig, Kunstverein, 1910, no. 67.
Gauguin and Cézanne, London, Stafford Gallery, 1911, no. 15.

Provenance:
On deposit for sale with Boussod et Valadon in 1888, the picture was sold to the financier Léon-Marie Clapisson on 4 December 1888; see Boussod register, **D** above.
Clapisson sale, Paris, Drouot, 28 April 1894, no. 8 (to Durand-Ruel).
Durand-Ruel, stock 3014: bought from Durand-Ruel by François Depeaux, Rouen, 4 May 1904.
Depeaux sale, Paris, Drouot, 1 June 1906, no. 175 (to Bernheim-Jeune).
Bernheim-Jeune, no. 15037.
(?) Libaude sale, Paris, Drouot, 9 March 1918, no. 13 ('*Landscape beside a river*, 0.73 × 0.60, dated 88').
Moderne Galerie (Heinrich Thannhauser), Munich.
Bought from Thannhauser by Ferdinand Baumgarten, Budapest, c. 1930.
Private collection, Brazil.



Boat, detail of a drawing. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

276
Cove opposite Pont-Aven Harbour

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.92
Signed and dated lower left:
88 P Gauguin
W266

The port is seen across a little inlet in the left bank of the Aven, a little upstream from



The port of Pont-Aven seen from the left bank, old postcard.



276

'Gargantua Rock', a large flat block of stone that sticks out into the current at right-angles to the stream; here it is hidden by the slopes of Mount Saint-Guénolé. The rock is opposite the house visible on the right in this picture, a thatched cottage that still stands today. *Willow (277)* was painted in more or less the same place. A leaf from a little sketchbook now dispersed bears a drawing of a boat, which Gauguin made use of in the present work.

Documents and bibliography:
Boussod et Valadon register (Rewald, *GBA*, 1973, p. 90): 'Pond by a road, 0.73 x 0.60, [bought from] the artist 10-11-88 [FF] 220, [sold to] Chéret 10-11-88 [FF] 300'. Despite the inexact title and dimensions, this is certainly the present work. Theo Van Gogh gives a sketch of it in the letter below.
Theo Van Gogh to Gauguin, 13 November 1888 (Merlhès XCIII): 'You'll probably be glad to know that your pictures [exhibited at Boussod's in November] have been a great success […]. Now two paintings have definitely been sold [including] a pond by a road'. A tiny sketch makes the identification clear.



Sketch in Theo Van Gogh's letter, 13 November 1888 (Merlhès XCIII). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 225: 'sold [to] Chéret Pond [FF] 225'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 266 (repr.).
J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, pp. 32, 33, 90.
C.-G. Le Paul: *L'Impressionnisme dans l'école de Pont-Aven*, Lausanne and Paris, 1983, p. 31, repr., with old postcard of the motif.
V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, p. 512, note 300 (on the 'presentation' of Gauguin works at Boussod et Valadon in November 1888).

Exhibitions:
Paris, Boussod et Valadon, November 1888, Gauguin's first solo exhibition (short exhibition without catalogue, see Merlhès, 1984, and Theo Van Gogh's letter, **D** above); the painting was sold on this occasion.
Eugène Carrière et le symbolisme, Paris, Orangerie, 1949-1950, no. 185.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Quimper, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 8.

Provenance:
On deposit for sale with Boussod et Valadon, c. November 1888.



277

Sold by Boussod to Chéret, 10 November 1888 (see register and letter, **D** above) – is this the poster-designer Jules Chéret (1836-1933)?
Sale, Paris, Drouot, 2 December 1902, no. 62.
Robert de Rothschild, Paris.
Cécile de Rothschild, Paris, c. 1950.
Dr. Walter Hanhart, Basel, c. 1957.
Private collection.

277
Willow by the Aven

Canvas. 0.74 × 0.60
Signed and dated lower right:
88 P. Gauguin
W267



The site in recent times. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Earlier state of the picture (from the catalogue of the 1927 sale).

The site is the same as that of *276*. The central willow, previously represented in *Bathing Place (223)* of 1886, no longer exists, and the unloading of sand visible in the background, which was a principal activity of the port during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, ceased completely in the 1970s; but the oak in the middle ground, by now more than a hundred years old, still survives.
An interesting question arises concerning the slender trunk by which the picture is divided; it appears in a reproduction of the painting from the catalogue of the 1927 sale, and seems to have been eliminated during a restoration subsequent to 1938. It is currently invisible, though a letter of 16 December 1969 from Reid and Lefevre to the owner of the work apparently indicates that it emerges under X-ray examination. The picture may well have contained this effect in its original state. Japanese in origin, such devices were very fashionable in the 1870s and 1880s (see *Two Women Bathing, 241*, inset).

Documents and bibliography:
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 267 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Gauguin et ses amis, Paris, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1934, no. 50.

Provenance:
Hazard sale, Paris, Georges Petit, 1-3 December 1919, no. 113 (to Brooks).
Alden Brooks, Paris.
Bought from Brooks by Bernheim-Jeune, 2 March 1920 (no. 21962).
Sold by Bernheim-Jeune to Nunès and Fiquet, Paris, 20 April 1921.
G.U. [Urion] sale, Paris, Georges Petit, 30-31 May 1927, no. 33 (to Dru).
A. Gold, c. 1934.
Étienne Bignou, Paris, with Reid and Lefevre, London, c. 1938.
Lord Ivor Spencer Churchill, London.
F.L.D. Strengholt, Netherlands, c. 1948.
Erven Strengholt.
Mr and Mrs Lawrence T. Porter, Saint Andrews East (Canada), 1952.
Mrs Lawrence Tupper Porter sale, London, Christie's, 5 July 1963, no. 57 (to Mrs Mathews).
Mr. A. Murray Vaughan, Montreal, 1964.
The Homer Estate.
Private collection.

278
Path down to the Aven

Canvas. 0.92 × 0.73
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W268



278

This picture shows the lower slopes of Mount Saint-Guénolé close to the cove depicted in *276* and *277*; the viewpoint is almost exactly the same as that of *Bathing Place, Pont-Aven Port (223)*, which is dated 1886. This is most unusual, especially since neither work is a repeat of the other: there are many differences in the arrangement of the rocks, tree trunks and other components of the picture. It seems, then, that both paintings were done from nature and from very similar points of view.
Obviously, the possibility arises that they were both painted the same year, and the fact that, in the first half of 1888, Gauguin frequently returned to classical Impressionist brushwork – very similar to his 1886 style – does nothing to simplify matters. On the other hand, just as *223* is in all respects compatible with Gauguin's first Pont-Aven campaign, so the present work, in terms both of technique and signature, perfectly fits a date in early 1888. Indeed, the preoccupation that Gauguin shows here with overhead perspectives was rather characteristic of 1888, as he soon after showed in the more dramatic view of the Aven, *300*.



Sheep, sketch. Gauguin's sketchbook, p. 102, detail. Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art.

We have no conclusive evidence for doubting the date inscribed by Gauguin. The rectilinear tree trunks on the right bring to mind the vertical tree trunk of *Willow by the Aven (277)*; they are less a product of observation, perhaps, than of the need to accentuate the spatial effect. The sheep may well derive from an 1886 sketch in the 1884-1886 sketchbook[1], but it is not alone in this; we know that Gauguin had the sketchbook with him (see introduction to this period). In the absence of more precise evidence, we have therefore catalogued these two works at the dates indicated by their signatures.
It is nevertheless most unusual for Gauguin to return to such similar motifs either within a single period or after a larger interval. The interest of the spatial effect was presumably the determining factor.

[1] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1884-1886 (Cogniat Rewald, 1962), p. 102.

Documents and bibliography:
Wilhelm Hansens Samling, Copenhagen, 1918, no. 125.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 268 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen, 1926, no. 48.
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1948, no. 35.
Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group, London, Tate Gallery, 1966, no. 8.

Provenance:
Georges Viau, Paris.
Bought from Viau by Wilhelm Hansen, Copenhagen, 1918.
Henny Hansen, widow of Wilhelm, 1936.
Wilhelm and Henny Hansen donation to the Danish state, 1951.
Charlottenlund (Denmark), Ordrupgaard.

279
Spring at Lézaven

Canvas. 0.70 × 0.92
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W249

Writing to Bernard, Gauguin places this scene 'aux Avins'[1], that is, near Lézaven manor, which stands a little out of the way, some five minutes walk to the west of Pont-Aven. This slightly raised viewpoint could perhaps be that of a first-floor studio on the north side of the manor (see inset).
We know of no studies for the two Breton women, who both wear the craftwoman's *coiffe* with long 'tails' over the shoulders. There are no convincing antecedents for the posture of the standing woman. The right-hand woman is a variant of the many seat-

Lézaven

The Lézaven manor house dates from the 16th century; it stands on a hillside north-west of Pont Aven amid meadowland studded with mature trees. The manor buildings, grouped around a central courtyard, had long since been used as a farm and the vestiges of its former glory were already dilapidated when the American artist Earl Shinn described it in a 'letter' to the readers of the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* of 17 November 1866[1].
By then, a space for painters – Americans in particular – had already been established there. Pont-Aven's increasing need to supply its colony of artists with studios had encouraged the conversion of part of the manor to this use. Generations of artists have worked and continue to work in the north-east corner of the first floor, which is whitewashed and fitted with large windows. Probably by the 1880s, and certainly by 1895, when Seguin rented one, there were several studios; they have since been knocked through into a single space. Gauguin had the chance to work there in 1886 on the invitation of his 'pupil' Puigaudeau, who rented one of the studios from the farmer Marie-Perrine Bergé, née Lollichon[2]. We know that Gauguin himself was a tenant in 1889[3] but not who was in occupation in 1888. Whether he was a tenant or not, Gauguin must have had frequent access to these studios that year since he painted several pictures there: the present work, the landscapes *280* (almost certainly) and *281*, and the portraits *290* and *291*, in which the sitters are silhouetted against the squares of glass of the then-new windows. These windows have survived to the present day, and can be seen in the photographs of Lézaven reproduced opposite *291* and on page 610.



Lézaven manor in 1939.

[1] B. Quéinec: *Pont-Aven 1800-1914*, [Pont-Aven,] 1983, pp. 92-93.
[2] V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, p. 440, notule 8; A.S. Hartrick: *A Painter's Pilgrimage through Fifty Years*, Cambridge, 1939, p. 33.
[3] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, summer 1889 (Malingue LXXXIV).



279



Sketch in a letter to Schuffenecker, 14 August 1888 (Merlhès 159). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

ed figures propped on one hand that had been part of Gauguin's vocabulary since 1886: see *Breton Shepherdess (233)*. That shepherdess had herself made a subsequent three-dimensional appearance on the lid of a vase (Gray 27). Did her exposed back in that work help to define the figure here (along with a similar one in the fan W202)? Here, as in W202, the bust is twisted in the opposite direction from that of the shepherdess, but inversions of this kind were now meat and drink to Gauguin (see *Riverside, 252*, inset).
An unpublished watercolour is reminiscent of this work both in its pointilliste manner and in certain of its motifs. It shows two figures. One is a Breton woman with a promi-

nent forehead, who, though she is seen from a slightly different angle, might possibly have been modelled by the standing woman on the left in the present work. (Could this by any chance be the model for the *Portrait, 293*?) The second is a seated woman lean-



Breton Women, watercolour. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

ing one hand on the ground, with her upper body turned to the right. But the seated woman is seen full face; it is as if Gauguin had been able to move around his model and work out a three-dimensional approach to this posture, showing one side of it in the watercolour and the other in the painting.
As though running the gamut of his technical experiments to date, in this work and *Shepherd and Shepherdess (280)*, Gauguin reverts to the little pointilliste brushstrokes of 1886, but now deploys them vertically in curtain-like surfaces. It must have seemed the right technique with which to convey the magical vibration of early spring. The poetry of space and light in this work perhaps constituted its attraction for Degas, who came close to buying it in November 1888[2].
A sketch of the woman on the left appears without remark among other Breton figures decorating a letter to Schuffenecker of 14 August 1888[3]; a drawing of both women is said to have been included in a letter to Bernard of 9-12 November 1888[4].

[1] Gauguin to Bernard, c. 9-12 November 1888 (Merlhès 178, D).
[2] See letters of November 1888, D.
[3] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 14 August 1888 (Merlhès 159).
[4] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, c. 9-12 November 1888 (Merlhès 178, D).

Documents and bibliography:

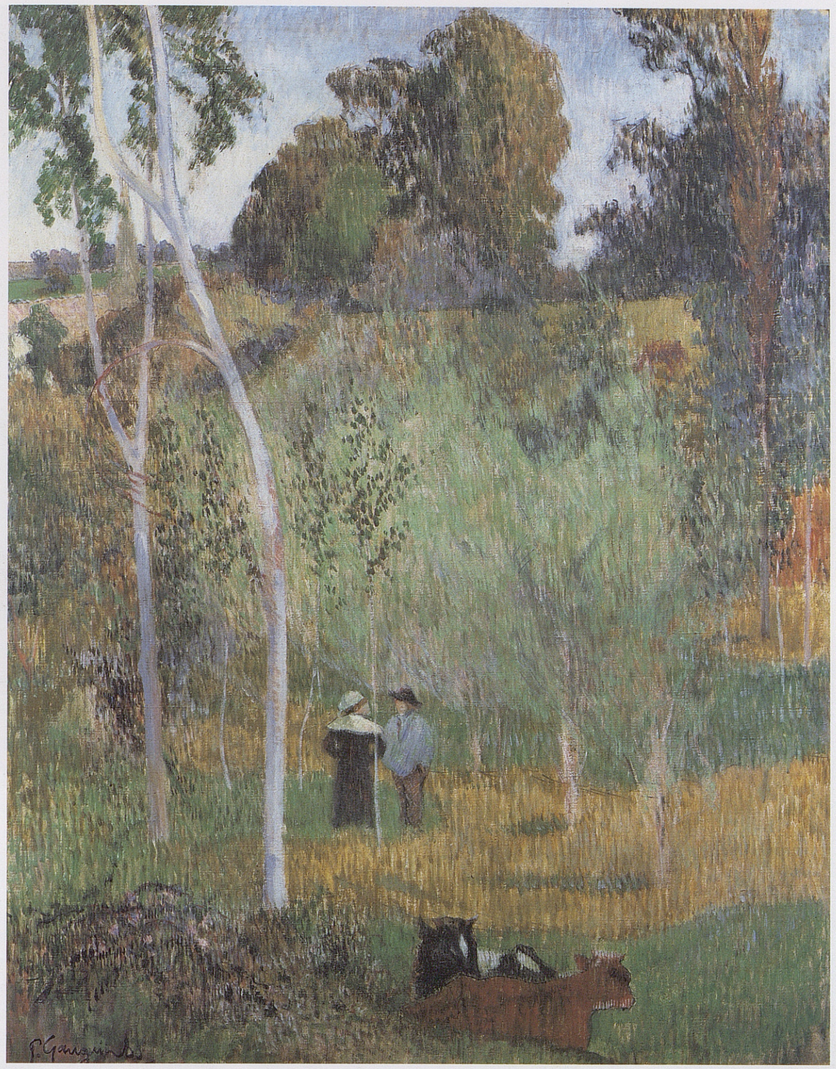
Gauguin to Émile Bernard, c. 9-12 November 1888 (Merlhès 178): 'I'm absolutely delighted with the result of my Pont-Aven studies [exhibited at Boussod's]. Degas is going to buy the one of the two Breton women at Les Avins*. For me, it's as flattering as can be: you know I have the greatest confidence in Degas' judgement – [at this point – p.70) – the edition of Bernard's letters, *Lettres de Paul Gauguin à Émile Bernard*, Geneva, 1954, cites 'sketch of the picture – 1 woman standing the other lying on the ground in a meadow'] besides, it's an excellent starting point from a business point of view. All Degas' friends trust his judgement'.
Theo Van Gogh to Gauguin, 13 November 1888 (Merlhès XCIII): 'You'll probably be glad to know that your pictures [exhibited at Boussod's in November] have been a great success […]. Degas is so enthusiastic about your works that he's talking to everyone about them and is going to buy the painting showing a spring landscape with a meadow in the foreground with two figures of women, one seated, one standing'.
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), pp. 72-73, lists made in preparation for the February 1889 exhibition of les XX: first list, p. 72: '[no.] 30 [canvas] landscape 2 Breton women'; definitive list, p. 73: [no.] 3 Breton landscape 2 women [valued FF] 500'.
List sent to O. Maus in late 1888, giving the prices asked for the works to be exhibited at les XX (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): Gauguin wanted FF 500 for this painting.
O. Maus: 'Le Salon des XX, à Bruxelles', *La Cravache*, 2 March 1889, p. 1: citing this work as one of the 'most enchanting', Maus continued 'all of them are praised by Degas, which must console the painter greatly for certain verdicts still echoing ironically in his ear'.
Luc le Flâneur [probably G.-A. Aurier], 'En quête des choses d'art', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 13 April 1889, p. 14: 'At Van Gog's*, Boussod Valadon company, 19 boulevard Montmartre […] wonderful pictures by that great poet Gauguin; amongst others, a spring Landscape of Pont-Avesnes, of so pure a style and so delicate in its harmonies'.
Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, spring 1889 (Malingue LXXVII): among the pictures to feature in the Volpini exhibition, Gauguin mentions: '3. The Breton women (1 standing, 1 lying)'.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 249 (repr.).

Exhibitions:

Gauguin's first solo exhibition, at Boussod and Valadon, November 1888 (short exhibition, without catalogue – see letter from Theo Van Gogh, 13 November 1888, D above, and V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, p. 512, note 300).
6e exposition des XX, Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, February 1889, no. 3 (*Breton Landscape*) – the preparatory lists confirm the presence of two women in this landscape, see Gauguin's sketchbook, D above.
Presentation of works by Degas, Pissarro, Forain, Gauguin, and Guillaumin at Boussod et Valadon, April 1889: see Luc le Flâneur, D above.
Peintures du groupe impressionniste et synthétiste, Paris, Exposition universelle, Volpini premises on the Champ-de-Mars, summer 1889, no. 31 (*First Flowers, Brittany*).
Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (D above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 40.

Provenance:

On deposit at Boussod et Valadon, c. November 1888 (see letters, D above). Degas came close to buying this painting.
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 12 in the catalogue, no. 13 in the auctioneer's book (*Breton Women in the Spring*, 250 F to Monsieur Alexandre Natanson, 60 avenue Bois de Boulogne).
Natanson, the editor of *La Revue Blanche*, bought *Bathers (297)* at the same sale.
P. Baudin sale, Paris, Drouot, 16 March 1921, no. 8 (to Monsieur Moch).
Mme Moch, Paris, c. 1956.
Kahn-Schreiber, Paris (nephew of Moch).
Sale, London, Sotheby's, 28 June 1976, no. 9.
Sale, New York, Sotheby's, 11 November 1999, no. 106.



280

280
Shepherd and Shepherdess in Meadow

Canvas. 0.92 × 0.73
Signed and dated lower left:
P. Gauguin 88
W250

This scene, in which human 'conversation' continues behind cattle nuzzling in the foreground, was probably painted on the tree-studded slopes of Lézaven (on which, see *Spring, 279*, inset).

Documents and bibliography:

Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 14 November 1888 (Merlhès 181), replying to Theo's letter of 13 November (Merlhès XCIII), in which Theo announced the sale of 'upright landscape with two dogs' *(282)*, Gauguin writes: 'Can you believe I tried for ages to think of a picture that had 2 dogs in and I thought the 2 black and red calves had been taken for carnivores'. This shows that the present work was also at Boussod et Valadon.
Gauguin's sketchbook. c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), pp. 72-73, lists made in preparation for the February 1889 exhibition of les XX: first list, '[no.] 30 [canvas] Landscape upright 2 calves' ["2 vo"]; p. 73, definitive list, '[no.] 5 shepherd and shepherdess 2 calves' ["2 vo"] (Gauguin uses the simplified spelling of Volapük, see *Cottages, 266*, inset '*PGo*').
List sent to O. Maus in late 1888, giving the prices asked for the works exhibited at les XX (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): Gauguin wanted FF 500 for this work.
O. Maus: 'Le Salon des XX, à Bruxelles', *La Cravache*, 2 March 1889, p. 1: cites this work as one of the 'most enchanting'.
Theo Van Gogh to Camille Pissarro, 8 March 1889 (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. II, 1986, p. 267): [at the exhibition of les XX] 'Seurat and Gauguin were also lucky enough to sell one picture each'.
Theo Van Gogh to O. Maus, 22 March 1889 (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): 'Thank you for yours of the 19th of this month containing the sum of 400 frs in payment of the Gauguin picture sold at the exhibition of les XX'.
Boussod et Valadon register (Rewald, *GBA*, 1973, p. 91): 'Shepherd and shepherdess – Bought from the artist 21-03-89 [FF] 360 – Sold to Mlle A. Bock* 21-03-89 [FF] 400'.
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (cf. above), p. 223: '[sold to] Mlle Bogh* shepherd and shepherdess [FF] 360'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 250 (repr.).
J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 87, note 139.

Exhibitions:

Since we know that the painting was at Boussod et Valadon in November 1888 (see Gauguin's letter to Theo Van Gogh, D above), it seems likely to have featured in the solo exhibition of works by Gauguin of that month.
6e exposition des XX, Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, February 1889, no. 5 (*Shepherd and Shepherdess*).
Exposition des peintres impressionnistes [La Libre Esthétique], Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, 1904, no. 48.
L'Évolution du paysage [La Libre Esthétique], Brussels, 1910, no. 101.
Vincent Van Gogh en zijn Tijdgenooten, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1930, no. 159.
Gauguin, les XX et La Libre Esthétique, Liège, Salle Saint-Georges, 1994-1995, no. 12.

Provenance:
On deposit for sale with Boussod et Valadon, c. November 1888; see letter to Theo Van Gogh, **D** above.
Bought from Boussod et Valadon by the painter Anna Boch in March 1889, after the exhibition of les XX. Anna Boch (1848-1936), daughter of Victor Boch (the founder of the Bochkeramis, a porcelain manufacturer) was born into a rich and cultivated society and was devoted to painting and music. She was cousin to Octave Maus, and seconded him in his promotion of avant-garde painting; she joined les XX in 1885, and subsequently belonged to La Libre Esthétique; she took part in Parisian Neo-Impressionist exhibitions from 1889, but subsequently returned to a more classically Impressionist style. She was also an important patron, holding Monday salons for painters and musicians at her Ixelles residence and establishing an important collection of modern painting, a large part of which was bequeathed to Belgian museums on her death. On her brother, the painter and poet Eugène Guillaume Boch, see *Autumn (313)*, **P**.
Bequeathed by Anna Boch to the Musées royaux de Belgique in 1936:
Brussels, Musée d'Art Moderne, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique – 5092.



281



Anna Boch painting, c. 1890. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



A. Boch: *Woman in a Landscape*, 1890-1892. Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum.

281
View of Pont-Aven from Lézaven

Oil on cardboard glued to panel.
0.70 × 0.54
W370

The slopes of Mount Sainte-Marguerite are visible in the background of this landscape, whose title is supplied by an inscription on a photograph traceable to Marie Henry (see **D**). On Lézaven, see *Spring (279)*, inset. This 'conversation piece' seems unfinished. It may perhaps date from 1889 when Gauguin was particularly interested in painting on cardboard.

Documents and bibliography:
Contract of 3 November 1919 specifying the sale by Marie Henry of *Bonjour, Monsieur Gauguin* and *Pont-Aven Landscape* to Francis Norgelet, representative of the Barbazanges-Hodebert gallery, for FF 20,000 (in the catalogue of the exhibition *De l'impressionnisme à l'art nouveau*, Paris, Musée d'Orsay, 1996-1997, p. 263).
A reproduction of this work appears in a set of photographs traceable to Marie Henry; these were probably taken around the time of the Barbazanges exhibition of 1919.
C. Chassé: *Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven*, Paris, 1921, pp. 39, 46: Marie Henry remembers this painting as having been hung on the west wall of the dining room of her *buvette*.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 370 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Paris, Barbazanges, 1919, no. 7 (*Breton Village* – the paintings in this exhibition came from Marie Henry's collection).

New York, Wildenstein, 1936, no. 5 (under the incorrect title, *Martinique*, but reproduced).
Cambridge (Massachusetts), Fogg Art Museum, 1936, no. 5 (similarly).
Cézanne, Gauguin, Toledo (Ohio), The Toledo Museum of Art, 1936, no. 2.
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental du Prieuré, 1985, no. 213 (not exhibited).

Provenance:
Marie Henry, Le Pouldu.
Sold by Marie Henry to galerie Barbazanges, 3 November 1919: see **D** above.
Bought from Barbazanges by Meyer Goodfriend.
Sale, New York, American Art Galleries, 4-5 January 1923, no. 91.
Mr and Mrs Charles H. Worcester, Chicago (Illinois), c. 1933.
Private collection, United States.

282
Dogs Running through a Field

Canvas. 0.920 × 0.725
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 88
W265

We have not been able to identify the motif of this work, which is reminiscent of certain meadow-paintings by Monet (D. Wildenstein 592-595, 1880). The vegetation (suggesting the month of May), the brushwork (which would fit well with a May date), and the Breton woman in her white *coiffe* stooping to tend the fenced-off garden (she is surely a reminiscence of the Pont-Avennoise of *Winter, 265*) all speak of Pont-Aven. But it must be said that there is no record of any factory in the town or its surroundings at that time. Mme Puget, conservator of the Musée de Pont-Aven, tells us that the nearest factory was the china clay works at Riec-sur-Belon, whose appearance is now unknown. Presumably this work was painted during an excursion. The little long-haired dog appears in certain of Gauguin's paintings of June 1888: *Haymaking (287)* and *Round Dance (296)*. We do not know to whom it belonged. Similar dogs also appear in a few 1889 works.

Documents and bibliography:
Theo Van Gogh to Gauguin, 13 November 1888 (Merlhès XCIII): 'your pictures [then on show at Boussod et Valadon] are a great success' […] Now two pictures have definitely been sold. One is the upright landscape with two dogs in a meadow' […]. As there is a combination of purchase and exchange I'm putting a value of fs 375 on the former'.
Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 14 November 1888 (Merlhès 181): 'I tried for ages to think of a picture with 2 dogs in […] I finally remembered'.
Boussod registers (Rewald, *GBA*, 1973, p. 91): 'Field with two dogs – 60 × 73 – [bought from] the artist 12-11-88 [FF] 360 – [sold to] Dupuis 12-11-88 [FF] 400'. The dimensions do not match but Theo Van Gogh's letter quoted above favours identification with this work.
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 225: '[sold to] Dupuis 2 dogs field [FF] 325'.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 265 (repr.).
J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, pp. 32, 33, 71 (on Dupuis), 74-75, 91.
V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, p. 512, note 300.

Exhibitions:
Solo exhibition of Gauguin's work, Paris, Boussod et Valadon, November 1888; see Theo Van Gogh's letter, **D** above.



282

Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 37.

Provenance:
On deposit for sale with Boussod et Valadon, c. November 1888.
Sold to Dupuis, 12 November 1888 (see Theo Van Gogh's letter and Boussod registers, **D** above).
Rewald notes that Dupuis, an industrialist, thinking that he had gone bankrupt in late 1890, committed suicide after selling on a part of his collection, in particular to the art-dealer Salvador Meyer (see *GBA*, **D** above; on Dupuis, see *Bathing Place, 221*, **P**). One wonders, however, whether he did not return certain works to Boussod, which would explain the presence of this work in the 1891 sale, which included a number of works from unsold Boussod stock.
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 24 in the sale, 25 in the auctioneer's book (to Monsieur Jean, rue Louis-le-Grand, FF 400).
Bought from Jean by Bernheim-Jeune, 7 May 1923 (no. 23384).
Sold by Bernheim-Jeune to Howard Young Galleries, New York, 21 June 1923.
Galerie Tanner, Zurich, c. 1927.
Bought from Tanner by Reid and Lefevre, London, 1934.
Sold by Reid and Lefevre to Lord Hollenden, London, 1935.
Henri Potez, Paris.
H. Potez sale, Paris, Drouot-Montaigne, 19 March 1996, no. 17.
Sale, London, Christie's, 28 June 1999, no. 14.



283


The Aven seen from a garden on the left bank, upstream from the Xavier-Grall promenade.

283
Turkeys, Pont-Aven

Canvas. 0.92 × 0.73
Signed and dated lower left:
P. Gauguin 88
W276

This view is of the Poche-Menu, an area studded with rocks in the middle of the River Aven a little downstream of the David mill. Two rounded blocks lie in the water behind the tree trunks on the right. On the left, the houses of the left bank stand behind a little branch of the river that forms the islet on which Gauguin set up his easel. In the background, the spire of the church stands out against the slopes of Roz-an-Bidou.
Subsequent constructions have altered the site, and, a little further downstream, a walkway in the middle of the stream has been built.

Documents and bibliography:
(?) Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 225: '[sold to] Clapisson Turkeys [FF] 250'. The identification of the work bought by Clapisson is fraught with uncertainty. It might equally be the painting with turkeys exhibited in 1886 (see *Stream, 100*), more especially since the present work was in Boussod's hands in 1891 (see Boussod registers, below). These registers show no sign of the work having been bought back from Clapisson or exchanged; on the other hand, we cannot be sure that these records were kept to very high standards.
But perhaps we should go further and question whether the Clapisson sale was really of a picture of *Turkeys*. As with other transactions noted on the same page, that sale may have been effected using Boussod et Valadon as intermediaries. In such cases, the sketchbook records the name of the buyer and the net price received, without mention of the gallery. Gauguin was only indirectly informed of such transactions, via Boussod. Now, Gauguin's notebook is particularly unclear about the Clapisson sale: the title *Turkeys* is written in one ink, while the name of the buyer and the price are in another, and would seem to have been added later. A question then arises whether Gauguin formed the incorrect impression that Clapisson had bought *Turkeys*, whereas he had, in fact, bought another portrait-format work at Boussod's, *Fishermen (275)*. For this, Gauguin did indeed receive FF 250 in 1888 (it should be noted that the sale of *Fishermen* to Clapisson is nowhere mentioned in the sketchbook).
(?) Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (Rewald, *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): among the no. 30 canvases, 'Landscape, tree trunks[,] upright [valued FF] 300' (other identifications are possible).
Boussod register (Rewald, *GBA*, 1973, p. 91): 'Turkeys – [bought from] the artist 19/05/91 – [FF] 360 [sold to] Chavasse 19/05/91 – [FF] 450'; the simultaneity of purchase and sale is proof that the work was on deposit for sale.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 276 (repr.).
J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, pp. 73, 78, 91.

Exhibitions:
La Faune, Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1910, no. 80.
L'Eau, Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1911, no. 19.
Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago, and New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1959, no. 9.

Provenance:
(?) Sold by Gauguin to Clapisson: see sketchbook, **D** above.
Deposited for sale with Boussod et Valadon, Paris, probably c. 1890 (see list, **D** above); sold to Chavasse, 19 May 1891 (see Boussod register, **D** above). On Jules Chavasse, a collector based in Sète, see *River Aven (268)*, **P**.
Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, c. 1910.
Bought from Bernheim-Jeune by Martin A. Ryerson, Chicago (Illinois), 1923.
Given by Mr and Mrs Martin A. Ryerson to The Art Institute of Chicago, 1923; exchanged with a New York gallery in 1948.
Herbert Wilcox, New York, until 1953.
Mr and Mrs William Goetz, Los Angeles (California), c. 1958.
Private collection, Japan, 1989.
Sale, New York, Christie's, 5 May 1998, no. 29.

284
Cow Lying at the Foot of a Tree

Canvas. 0.47 × 0.34
Signed lower left: *P G*
W279


284



285

This cow, with its white nose, also appears in the fan W223, whose subject is Martinican, but which may have been painted after Gauguin's return. A similar tree trunk features around the same time in *Clog-Maker (286)*.

Documents and bibliography:
Vollard Archives, register of receipts and payments, 1904-1907: '4304 [Provenance] Roy. Cow lying by a tree [FF] 40' – The low price suggests that this was a small work.
Vollard Archives, 1904 register: '29 July paid to Roy 400 frs for purchase of Gauguin [six works, among them] Cow 4304'.
Vollard Archives, inventory of 1 January 1922: 'no. 5433 Cows. Oil 47 × 34 [valued FF] 800'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 279 (repr.).

Provenance:
Bought from the painter Louis Roy by Vollard in 1904. For Roy, see still life *215*. Still belonged to Vollard in 1922 (see inventory, **D** above), but is not mentioned in the successional inventory of 1939.
Sale, Paris, Drouot, 3 February 1944, no. 46.
Olivier, Paris.
Sale, Paris, hôtel George V, 17 June 1976, no. A (bought in).
Private collection, France.

285
Breton Boy by the Aven or White River

Canvas. 0.58 × 0.72
W263

L'Aven is seen from the left bank, from the lower slopes of Mount Saint-Guénolé, opposite the port, whose wharf is visible at the top of the work. Despite the spring-like atmosphere, the picture must have been painted around June when the brambles and tamarisk (to the right) first come into flower; they blossom throughout the summer[1]. The presence

of bathers confirms this. No drawing is known for the figure of the little boy from either 1886 or 1888.
The layout of this fine study of light and water is reminiscent of certain Martinican paintings. It shows the influence of what Berger terms 'first-wave' *japonisme*, that of Degas and Whistler; it was soon to be followed by a further bird's-eye of the Aven (*300*), which, though painted from almost exactly the same point, is noticeably more daring and marks the transition to a new stage in Gauguin's *japonisme* (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset). The right-hand side of the present work is in poor condition.
On the other side of the canvas is the *Portrait of Madeleine Bernard (305)*, painted in September. This landscape, in what Bernard (**D**) described as Gauguin's 'previous manner', was sacrificed, almost certainly for lack of money and canvas, to the portrait, a work much dearer to Gauguin's heart, during the great stylistic revolutions of the summer. On the double-sided works of the summer, see *Haymaking (287)*.

[1] As Monsieur Lemattre informs us.

Documents and bibliography:
P. Jamot: 'Le Salon d'automne', *GBA*, December 1906, p. 467: 'the White River (Fabre collection), luminous and original in its layout'.
É. Bernard: *Souvenirs inédits sur Paul Gauguin…*, fascicule collection of a series of articles that appeared in 1939, Lorient, no date, p. 11: 'Gauguin painted a portrait (not a good resemblance but very interesting stylistically) on the back of a Pont-Aven landscape (previous manner), which is currently in the Musée de Grenoble'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 263 (repr.).
C.-G. Le Paul: *L'Impressionnisme dans l'École de Pont-Aven*, Lausanne and Paris, 1983, p. 64 (repr., with location of the motif).

Exhibitions:
(?) Weimar, Grossherzogliches Museum für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe, July-September 1905 (in P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven im Deutschland* […], Sigmaringen, 1997, pp. 24-27), no. 32: *White River*. No mention in the catalogue of the portrait of Madeleine Bernard.
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1906, no. 157: *White River, Brittany*. No mention of the portrait of Madeleine Bernard.
Ausstellung französischer Malerei, Winterthur, Kunstverein, 1916, no. 60 (mentions both sides).

Provenance:
Maurice Fabre, Montpellier.
Bought from Druet by Bernheim-Jeune, 20 April 1909 (no. 17308).
Bought from Bernheim-Jeune by the municipality of Grenoble in 1923:
Grenoble, Musée de Grenoble – MG 2190.



The Clog-Maker's Workshop, drawing.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

286
Clog-Maker

Canvas. 0.58 × 0.49
W280

A drawing, of which only the left-hand side is used here, sketches in the rural setting. Clog-making was a local craft, here practised at a rudimentary work bench; there is the suggestion of a fire behind the bench. The rather undifferentiated background is a little surprising, but *Cow (284)*, with its tree trunk set on a uniform background, is analogous in its decorative arrangement. It is, however, possible that Gauguin was repre-



286



Robert P. Bevan:
Clog-makers, drawing.
Private collection.

senting the wattle walls of the clog-maker's lean-to, just as they appear in a very similar scene drawn some years later by the English artist Robert Bevan. The trunk in the foreground is no novelty (see, in particular, *Two Women Bathing, 241*, inset); is it a transposition of the kind of rustic 'pillars' visible in Bevan's drawing?
This slightly mysterious work seems to be unfinished. On its reverse side is a seascape dedicated to Moret *(288)*.

Documents and bibliography:
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 280 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1966, no number.
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1978, no number.
Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Toronto (Ontario), Art Gallery of Ontario, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, 1981, no. 53.
Gauguin, les XX et La Libre Esthétique, Liège, Salle Saint-Georges, 1994-1995, no. 14.

Provenance:
Given by Gauguin to Henry Moret before 1890 (see *288*, **P**).
Max Kann, Paris.
Samuel Josefowitz, Lausanne, 1958.
Paul Yeou Chichong, Papeete, 1989; deposited by him with the Musée de Pont-Aven, 1990.

287
Haymaking

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.92
Signed and dated lower left:
P. Gauguin – 88
W269

The hay is being made in Lollichon field, which Gauguin had painted in 1886 (*225* and *226*). This time, however, we see the front view of the cottages, which face north. For this site, see *225*. The point of view is similar to that of *Round Dance of the Breton Girls (296)*, which also takes place amid the mown hay and probably dates from the second half of June. Similar, but not the same: there is a whole series of little differences, leaving one wondering whether the landscape was not painted from nature in both works. For *Haymaking*, Gauguin faithfully copied a drawing of the spire from his 1884-1886 sketchbook[1], which we know that he had with him again in 1888 (see introduction to this period).
But the simplification in this scene is much greater. Gauguin has left out the little tree and low wall recorded in *Round Dance*, and the treatment here in large unified areas is not dissimilar to that of *Wrestlers (298)* which Gauguin would certainly have considered 'Japanese' (see *Wrestlers*, inset). This would suggest that it was painted after *Round Dance*, very likely in July.

Penury ■ On the back of this work is a still life with flowers, *262*. Gauguin was out of canvas: 'Bernard says that he can't bear to see how often Gauguin is prevented from doing things he is perfectly capable of doing for simple material reasons, such as paints and canvas', Van Gogh noted[2]. *White River (285)* and *Rocks on the Coast (288)* are both painted on the reverse of other paintings. Necessity, combined with Gauguin's relative loss of interest in works that had remained within the confines of Impressionism, seem to have impelled him to sacrifice earlier works to his new stylistic experiments. This is certainly the case with *White River*. The little dog also appears in *Round Dance (296)* and *Dogs Running (282,* q.v.*)*.

[1] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1884-1886 (Cogniat-Rewald, 1962), p. 105.
[2] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 11-12 September 1888 (535).

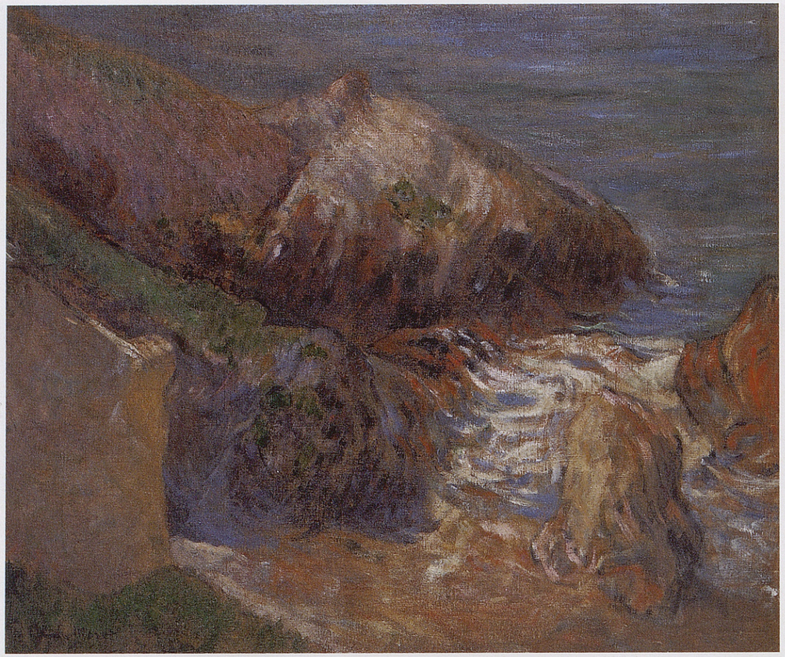
Documents and bibliography:
(?) Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh, (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49) – among the no. 30 canvases: 'Houses with bell tower [valued FF] 300'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 269 (repr.).



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Exhibitions:
Paris, galerie Le Portique, 1931, no. 31.
Gauguin et ses amis, Paris, Gazette des beaux-arts, 1934, no. 54.
Paris, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1936, no. 25.
Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-1950, no. 16.
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 34.
1886-1986. Cent ans. Gauguin à Pont-Aven, Pont-Aven, Musée de Pont-Aven, 1986, no. 27.

Provenance:
(?) On deposit for sale with Boussod et Valadon, Paris, c. 1890: see list, **D** above.
Paul Jamot, Paris, c. 1931
Bequeathed by Jamot to the Musée du Louvre, entered its collection 1941.
Musée national du Louvre, galeries du Jeu de Paume.
Transferred to the Musée d'Orsay:
Paris, Musée d'Orsay – RF 1941.28.



288

288
Rocks on the Coast

Canvas. 0.49 × 0.58
Signed, dated and dedicated lower left:
à l'ami Moret / P. Gauguin 88
W285

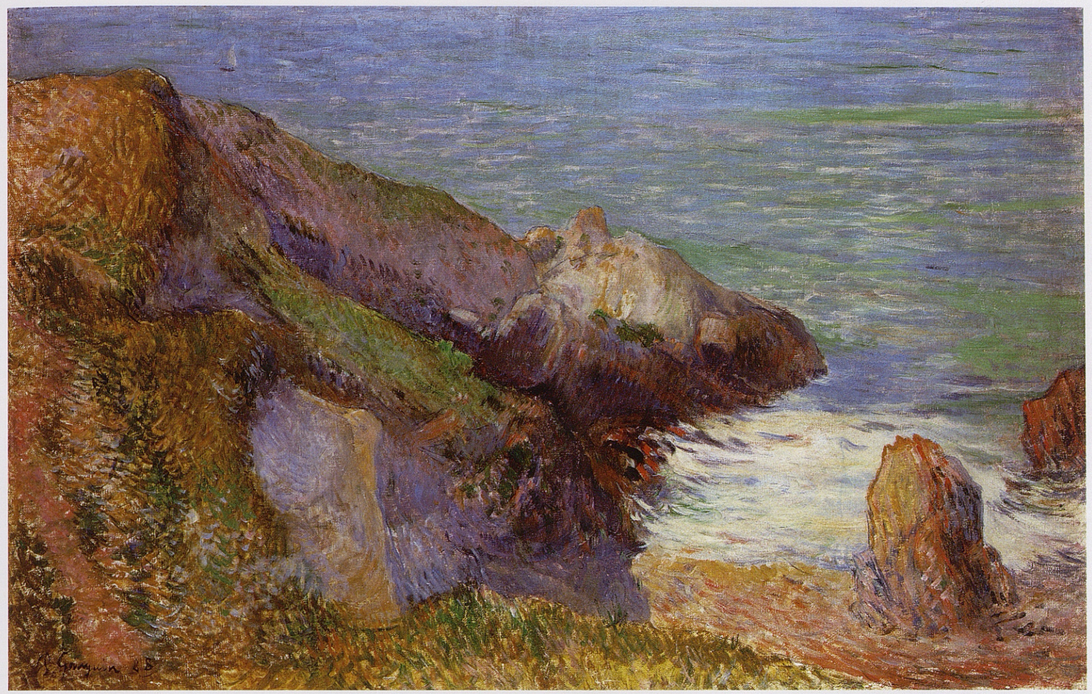
It was easy to make an excursion from Pont-Aven to the mouth of the Aven, where Gauguin may perhaps have found this motif. The vicinity of Le Pouldu is another possibility; Gauguin had worked there in 1886, and Moret, the dedicatee, visited it regularly. We note that the still life with flowers, *262*, also has a maritime setting. At all events, the subject is the same as that of *289*, and it seems logical to consider this small painting as a study from nature in preparation for the more ambitious *289*. The technique suggests a date before mid-August.
Gauguin's dearth of canvas of that summer (see *Haymaking, 287*) is surely the reason why there is another painting on the reverse of this canvas: *Clog-Maker (286)*. The dedication to Moret is inscribed on the seascape side, as though this were the side that Gauguin deemed fit to present to his colleague.
We know very little about the relations of Gauguin and Moret, who had been a Le Pouldu regular over a number of years, and must have been in the Pont-Aven region in 1888. Chamaillard, in his memoirs, claims that Moret was part of the Gauguin clan: 'in 1888 […] Gauguin was at Pont-Aven with Laval, Moret and me; he informed us of the arrival of a very young painter named Bernard[1]'. Laval arrived in Pont-Aven in July, and Bernard shortly before 15 August. Chamaillard also spoke of 'the excellent lessons that the master lavished on us'. But that master-student relation was probably more intense with Chamaillard, who was then something of a beginner, than with Moret, who seems not to have been so very close to Gauguin at this stage. The painting must have been given to Moret before 1890 since the sketchbook in which Gauguin noted it (D) seems not to have been used after that date.

[1] Chamaillard, interviewed by C. Morice in 'Échos. Petite contribution à l'histoire d'un grand peintre', *Mercure de France*, 15 April 1906, p. 637.

Documents and bibliography:
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 224: 'Moret seascape given'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 285 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group, London, Tate Gallery, 1966, no. 35.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1966, no. 35.

Provenance:
Given by Gauguin to the painter Henri Moret before 1890: see sketchbook, D above.
Max Kann, Paris.
Samuel Josefowitz, Lausanne, 1958.
Paul Yeou Chichong, Papeete, 1989; deposited by him with the Musée de Pont-Aven in 1990.



289

289
Rocks on the Breton Coast

Canvas. 0.59 x 0.92
Signed and dated lower left:
P. Gauguin 88
W284

The subject is the same as that of *228*, though the location remains uncertain; the field of vision is slightly wider. This more carefully worked painting would seem to be a repeat of *228* (q.v.) Given the expanded field of vision, the periphery of the painting was presumably painted from memory.

Documents and bibliography:
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 284 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Den Frie Udstilling, Copenhagen, Free Exhibitions Building, 1893, no. 139 (*Brittany Seascape*, 1888, 0.575 × 0.915);
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1948, no. 32.
Oslo, Kunstnerforbundet, 1955, no. 14.
Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, and London, Tate Gallery, 1955, no. 20.
Gauguin og hans Venner, Copenhagen, Winkel & Magnussen, 1956, no. 65.
Paris, Charpentier, 1960, no. 35.
Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1960, no. 35
Tokyo, Kyoto and Fukuoka, 1969, no. 15.
Gauguin og Van Gogh i København i 1893, Charlottenlund, Ordrupgaard, 1984, no. 27 (not exhibited).

Provenance:
Mette Gauguin, Copenhagen, c. 1893.
Benny Dessau, Copenhagen (certainly bought from Mette, with whom the Dessaus were friends).
Mrs Benny Dessau, Copenhagen, c. 1948.
Einar Dessau, c. 1955
Troels Munck, c. 1983.
Private collection, Japan.

290
Portrait, Presumed to be of Marie Lagadu

Canvas. 0.325 × 0.405
Signed and dated on the vertical, upper left: *P G 88*

Like Gauguin's *Self-Portrait (291)* or that of Laval's Van Gogh Museum self-portrait (reproduced opposite the 'still life' *238*), this little painting has, as its background, one of the window-bays of the Lézaven studio; it looks out over the surrounding greenery. (On Lézaven, see *Spring, 279*, inset.) The rather unassuming brushwork suggests the spring or early summer, and in any case places it before July. It is noteworthy that it is signed with the monogram *P G*; this might suggest that the form *P Go* (on which, see *Cottages, 266*, inset) appeared only later, after the first months of Gauguin's stay. He made a preparatory drawing for this painting, and there is, in our view, no reason not to ascribe it to 1888, rather than 1886, as has sometimes been supposed.



Breton Woman, drawing. Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago (Arthur Heun Fund).

'Black-eyed' Marie ■ Though the identity of the model remains mysterious, there is enough evidence to let in a little light: in all probability, this painting can be identified with '*La Gudu, Serving Girl*, 1888, 0.31 × 0.39', no. 141 at the 1893 Copenhagen exhibition. Almost equally certain is that this 'Gudu' must be the same as one Marie 'Lagadu' of Pont-Aven, whose name has come down to us – though it is not her name, but a nickname, since 'Lagadu' means 'black eyes', and tells us nothing about her true name and marital status.

Who was Marie 'Lagadu'? The background to this question is a little encumbered. The name Lagadu first appeared in the literature, it seems, in 1956, in relation to the portrait of a Breton woman by Sérusier; it was also attached to a Gauguin portrait of a townswoman who could hardly be the same woman, W387; both were reproduced in Rewald's book *Post-Impressionism*[1]. These identifications were probably suggested by Mme Cochennec, daughter of Marie Henry, when she rejected the idea that Sérusier's portrait was of her mother; on this topic, see the portrait of a Breton woman, *293*, where Sérusier's picture is reproduced. And the first attempt to identify Marie Lagadu appeared in Jaworska's publication of Sérusier's work, which was captioned '*Portrait of Marie Lagadu (Marie Derrien)*[2]'.

A different Mary ■ Now it happens that Marie Derrien is one of the best known characters of Gauguin's Pont-Aven: her identity documents and work certificate, combined with various first-person accounts and a large number of photographs (most of them in the Musée de Pont-Aven) give us a clear picture of her. One such, in which she is seen standing, is reproduced opposite *Captain Jacob (306)*. She was born in 1866, entered the employment of the pension Gloanec as a serving woman, where she remained until 1902, married a widower, Louis Corentin Le Pape, a roofer, in 1903, and was for a long time proprietress of a bar. She died at the age of ninety in 1957. It is clear that Jeanne Marie Gabriel* Derrien knew Gauguin well and looked after him when he was injured in 1894, but there is no suggestion of impropriety.

There would, then, be nothing unusual about Gauguin painting her portrait. Yet the present work seems not to be of Marie Derrien, whose face was long, soft-featured, and perfectly symmetrical; her temples were somewhat recessed and her eyelids slightly drooping. Neither the present work nor the preparatory drawing in the Chicago museum matches this description: both present a element of lively physical presence quite unlike the calm radiance that distinguishes Marie Derrien's face in the many surviving photos in which she appears. This leads us to doubt the relatively recent suggestion that Maries Lagadu and Derrien are one and the same. Where did it originate? None of Marie Derrien's kin today has heard of her being nicknamed 'black eyes'; they say that, on the contrary, her eyes were blue. When Malingue interviewed Marie Derrien-Le Pape in the 1950s, she made no mention of such a nickname[3].

Marie… Niger? ■ In fact, all memory of the real Marie Lagadu, whom we persist in believing the model for this work) seems to have vanished in Pont-Aven. Yet we know – from the 1893 exhibition catalogue – that she was a 'serving girl'. It is therefore tempting to examine the many photos showing both painters and serving girls in front of the Gloanec inn. Certain of these ancillary figures emerge clearly from such study, and one wonders whether Marie Lagadu might not be this young Breton woman, visible in an 1886 photo, with her working *coiffe*, as in the portrait, decorated with a large coloured ribbon (the young women normally wore only white on their heads). Or again, could she be one of the two serving girls that the Clohars-Carnoët census returns[4] tell us were employed at the Gloanec inn in 1886, Marie-Anne Jacques and Marie Niger? Since neither census nor photographs are likely to offer a complete survey of the girls serving at the inn in 1888, these suggestions remain entirely hypothetical.



Artists and serving women at the auberge Gloanec in 1886, detail of a photograph. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



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[1] J. Rewald: *Post-Impressionism*, New York, 1956, pp. 293 and 309.
[2] W. Jaworska: *Paul Gauguin et l'école de Pont-Aven*, Paris, 1971, p. 130.
[3] M. Malingue: 'Le souvenir de Gauguin à Pont-Aven', press-cutting from the 1950s, no references, in the collection of the Musée de Pont-Aven.
[4] The results of these censuses were kindly supplied by the centre de Documentation du Musée de Pont-Aven.

Documents and bibliography:

(?) Gauguin to De Monfreid, August 1892 (Joly-Segalen XII): 'my wife […] had no sooner arrived in Copenhagen than she sold 4 pictures including an insignificant one (little head of a Breton woman) for 1500 fr'. Another identification is possible for this 'little head of a Breton woman': *293*. But the *293* seems to have remained in France, where it is known to have been late in the 19th century, while the presence in Copenhagen in 1893 of the present work is attested by its presence in the Danish exhibition as no. 141.

Exhibitions:

Den Frie Udstilling, Copenhagen, Free Exhibitions Building, 1893, no. 141: *La Gudu, Serving Girl*, 1888, 0.31 × 0.39. A copy of the catalogue has a hand-written note opposite no. 141: '100 [Danish crowns]'. This annotation could indicate that the work was on sale at that price. But since the painting seems to have been sold before the exhibition (see letter, **D** above), the price may simply be a record of that sale.
Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 31: *Woman at the Window*, 1888.

Provenance:

Mette Gauguin probably took this work back to Copenhagen after her brief Parisian visit in May 1892, and sold it shortly after her return; see letter, **D** above.
Thannhauser, Berlin, c. 1928.
Bought from Thannhauser by Dr Hermann Loepp, Berlin, 1928.
Private collection, Germany (by inheritance).
In the German art trade, c. 1991.



291

291
Self-Portrait at Lézaven

Canvas. 0.405 × 0.325
Signed and dedicated upper left:
à l'ami Carrière / P Gauguin
Lower left, an inscription almost entirely painted over and barely decipherable:
à l'ami Laval PGo
W384

Gauguin posed in front of the windows of the Lézaven studio, which also form the background of the little portrait *290* and the Laval *Self-Portrait* reproduced opposite the 'still life' *238*. On Lézaven, see *Spring, 279*, inset.



Interior of the studio at Lézaven.

The technique of this work seems to place it in the first part of Gauguin's stay, giving it a date in spring or early summer 1888. Though still possessed of an Impressionist realism, it nevertheless gives a particular cast to that famous 'reality'.

A strange being ■ A little more than three years had gone by since the Danish *Self-Portrait (165)*. The rather buttoned-up young man of that picture had given way to a more complex character sporting the long hair of an artist; in his expression we read a host of thoughts, not all of them happy. His hair and clothes alike clearly define him as on the fringes of modern, bourgeois life. The green and yellow at his neck perhaps belong to the 'green and yellow embroidered waistcoat' that Charles Morice saw Gauguin wearing in 1894[1]. This would be the Breton waistcoat that we see on Gauguin in 1891 photos and in the (colourless) Carrière portrait of him painted that same year, which resembles the garment here in every respect but the odd button or two.



Gauguin in 1880, detail of a photograph. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Gauguin's garb is the first clear indication of his desire to appear 'primitive' (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset). Moroever, this Breton costume was soon to become an artist's badge. Jourdan, himself a Breton, was probably one of the first to adopt it; he sports an embroidered waistcoat in the photograph reproduced in the Chronology (1880). De Haan does likewise in a self-portrait of 1889 or 1890[2].
But the most revealing thing is perhaps the physiognomy with which Gauguin endows himself. This is a work of astonishing subtlety. It insists on the powerful and demanding physicality of the man: on the massive chest and huge neck pulsing with blood. The lower part of his face is exaggerated (compare his chin here with the contemporary photographs); this attraction toward the base is 'primitive' in kind, and has already been seen in certain areas of the portrait of *Clovis (208)*. The elegant outline of the face imparts an animal aspect culminating in a surprisingly pointed ear, which foreshadows the little boy of *295*, and clearly evokes the 'wild' component in Gauguin's make-up (on this notion, see *Fruit, 312*, 'Not afraid to kill').
Though preyed on by instinct, this character has a remarkably lucid and self-aware gaze; an ambiguous gaze, that seems to focus on more than one level of reality. The experience of suffering is implied, but the gaze remains clear and frank, as if the exploration of inner turmoil was nonetheless subject to the conscious mind's direction. We note that here, as in the self-portraits *309* and W324, Gauguin's self-examination is conducted above all with his right eye.

A zest of primitive art? ■ The tight framing, sharply delineated contours of the face, and the green background strongly evoke certain 15-16th century portraits, such as those of Corneille de Lyon or Cranach, who were then considered 'primitives'. There is nothing to show that Gauguin was particularly interested in these old masters at the time, and it is therefore difficult to know how conscious this reference is. But a taste for this art was in the air of the times; see *The Vision (308)*, inset on European primitives.
One notes with astonishment that the portrait is painted on a coarse-grained canvas, though it is rather less coarse than the notorious jute on which most of the Arles pictures were painted (see *Les Alyscamps, 316*, inset). In March, Vincent had written to Theo Van Gogh, telling him 'I bought some coarse canvas here, and had it prepared for matt effects[3]'. Like the canvas here, Van Gogh's canvas was surely more finely-textured than the jute of Arles. We know that Van Gogh wrote to Gauguin too, that same day[4]: did he mention his new interest in this coarser material? At all events, it seems clear that Gauguin sought to confer a raw quality to this work in which he first suggests the 'primitive' or the 'savage' in his own nature.

Token of an abandoned friendship ■ The first dedication is just barely decipherable, and shows that Gauguin presented this work to his close friend and disciple Charles Laval, as a symbol of the close relations between them: see *Still Life with*

Laval's Profile (238). We do not know when the gift was made, though it must postdate Laval's arrival in Pont-Aven in July 1888. In Gauguin's sketchbook[5], the gift is noted between two sales, one from March, the other from September 1889, but these transactions may all have been noted retrospectively, in no particular order. It undoubtedly belongs to the multilateral exchange of portraits that took place between Gauguin, Van Gogh, Bernard and Laval from summer 1888 on (see self-portrait *Les Misérables, 309*). Laval was no doubt delighted at the gift, but it was only briefly in his hands; towards May 1890, their friendship cooled markedly (see *Still Life with Laval's Profile*, inset); the return of the portrait and the painting over of the dedication suggest a fairly serious disagreement. Harsh words were probably exchanged. The last mention of Laval in Gauguin's correspondence – 'that imbecile Laval'[6] – dates from 25 October 1890 and suggests that Laval was seeking a reconciliation. Gauguin was not likely to let his guard down for so little.

An exchange of courtesies ■ Gauguin soon enough found a new dedicatee: not a close friend, but a man of established reputation whose esteem he reciprocated. Eugène Carrière (1849-1906) was practically Gauguin's contemporary. By the late 1880s, he was widely admired by public and critics alike, and remained on excellent terms with the Symbolist literary avant-garde despite his 'official' successes.



Eugène Carrière with his son Jean-René in the studio. Photo: Dornac.

He must have met Gauguin in these avant-garde circles, probably by autumn 1890[7] and in any case by early 1891. In January 1891, Carrière, too, exhibited at Boussod et Valadon, and the Mondays at the café Voltaire, Symbolist dinners like those of the 'Têtes de bois' or the Moréas banquet in February provided them with an occasion to meet. Sérusier noted that, around this time, Carrière had taught Gauguin a method of engraving on copper, and had himself varnished the plate of Gauguin's *Portrait of Mallarmé* (Guérin 13 and 14)[8].



E. Carrière: *Portrait of Gauguin*, 1891. New Haven (Connecticut), Yale University Art Gallery (bequest of Fred T. Murphy).

Gauguin was enjoying a season in the spotlight; some measure of success seemed at last to be coming his way, and he was making a very deliberate play for social success; in De Monfreid's later judgement, Gauguin was happy to be 'extolled' by the writers 'who proclaimed him the "leader" of symbolism in painting[9]'. At all events, Carrière recognised in him an undeniable talent: 'without worrying whether he is captain or general in the symbolist army, I believe he is an artist[10]'. Carrière was then in the middle of a series of portraits of literary and other major figures of the period, and in February 1891 suggested making a portrait of Gauguin, who must have been very flattered. That portrait was painted over three sittings in March, and this work presumably given to Carrière by way of exchange[11]. The date of the exchange is a matter of controversy, but it must surely have been made before Gauguin left for Tahiti in April 1891.

Carrière and Gauguin may have met again between Gauguin's stays in Tahiti, for example at Mallarmé's 'Tuesdays' or at the 'Têtes de bois' dinners, but if so, the meetings have left little trace, with the possible exception of their combined presence at the banquet in honour of Puvis de Chavannes (in 1895)[12]. But we know that Gauguin retained a sincere admiration for Carrière, whose moral and spiritual qualities he no doubt recognised, along with his artistic independence. In March or April 1891, he wrote to him 'I particularly value your esteem as that of a great artist[13]', and, later in life, he several times named him among the great talents of the age in the book *Racontars de rapin* and *Avant et après*. Each followed his own path, and their friendship was not a close one. Carrière was not a wholehearted admirer – 'Not a nice mouth,' he later told Morice[14]; but on Gauguin's death, Carrière gave Morice a short but rather perceptive article for the *Mercure de France*, in which he makes it clear that, though he could not go all the way with Gauguin, he nonetheless perceived the profundity, finesse and revolutionary power of Gauguin's quest[15]. Rewald has suggested that it was Carrière's manner, rather than that of Redon, that Gauguin attempted in certain drawings of 1891, notably the notorious *Madame Death*. At the time, Gauguin was moving closer to Symbolist circles in general, and notably to those friends and admirers of Carrière, his own new advocates, Aurier and Dolent[16].

[1] C. Morice: *Paul Gauguin*, Paris, Floury, 1919, p. 117.
[2] Number 50 of the exhibition *1886-1986. Cent ans. Gauguin à Pont-Aven*, Pont-Aven, Musée de Pont-Aven, 1986.
[3] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 4-9 March 1888 (467)
[4] Vincent Van Gogh to Gauguin, 4-9 March 1888 (Merlhès XXXVII, lost).
[5] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 223 (**D**).
[6] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, in V. Merlhès: *De Bretagne en Polynésie. Pages inédites*, Tahiti, 1995, p. 53.
[7] See Bantens, 1989, p. 259 (**D**).
[8] C. Chassé: 'Gauguin et Mallarmé', *L'Amour de l'art*, August 1922, p. 246, note 1.
[9] Chassé, 1922, p. 247.
[10] Carrière to Geffroy, early 1891, in the catalogue of the exhibition *Carrière*, Musées de Strasbourg, ancienne Douane, 1996-1997, p. 58.
[11] Morice, 1919, (**D**).
[12] Bantens, p. 261 (**D**).
[13] J.-R. Carrière: *De la vie d'Eugène Carrière*, Paris, 1966, p. 173.
[14] Morice, 1919 (**D**).

[15] Morice, 1903, pp. 413-414 (**D**).
[16] J. Rewald: *Post-Impressionism*, New York, 1956, p. 458.

Documents and bibliography:
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 223: 'Laval my portrait given'.
C. Morice: 'Quelques opinions sur Paul Gauguin', *Mercure de France*, November 1903, p. 416 – after the Carrière text cited above, Morice published a few lines by Jean Dolent: 'I like the Gauguin self-portrait that he gave to Carrière and the portrait of Gauguin by Carrière that he gave to Gauguin. That means something'. Dolent also noted 'Carrière, decisive and authoritative – he has earned the right to such tones – "Gauguin is finer than Burne-Jones"'.
List of the Fayet collection drawn up in 1910 at the château d'Igny: 'Self-Portrait (Brittany) [valued FF] 3000'.
Charles Morice: *Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1919, pp. 12 (repr.), 38: 'Carrière has considerable sympathy for Gauguin, and though it is, I think, exclusively intellectual, it is not without reservation: "Not a nice mouth," he once told me./ On the other hand, he spontaneously offered to paint Gauguin's portrait. There weren't many sittings, three in all, I think. In exchange, is it not typical? Gauguin gave Carrière his own [self-] portrait, which he had made some time before./ And to me he said: "In my portrait by Carrière, I look like Delacroix"'.
E. Gauguin [Emil, Gauguin's eldest son], preface to *Intimate Journals of Paul Gauguin* [a translation of *Avant et après*], New York, 1923, reprinted, Bloomington, 1958, p. 10: 'My last memory of him is singularly vivid. He had come up to Copenhagen to bid us adieu before his last trip to Tahiti […]. As a parting gift, he gave me a portrait Eugène Carrière had painted of him that year. An excellent likeness, I have it still'. Emil's memory is probably inexact. We may suppose that Gauguin promised Emil the portrait that Carrière was to paint of him on his return to France. Mette came to Paris in May 1892 and 'seized' it (as we learn from Morice's letter to Carrière, see J.-R. Carrière: *De la vie d'Eugène Carrière*, Paris, 1966, p. 164).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 384 (repr.).
R.J. Bantens: 'Eugène Carrière and Paul Gauguin', *Southeastern College Art Conference Review*, 1989, pp. 259-268.
R. Bacou: 'Paul Gauguin et Gustave Fayet, *Actes du colloque Gauguin* […], *1989*, Paris, 1991, p. 28.

Exhibitions:
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1906, no. 1, 2, or 3 (all three: *Self-Portrait*, belonging to Monsieur Fayet).
New York, Wildenstein, 1936, no. 32.
Cambridge (Massachusetts), Fogg Art Museum, 1936, no. 31.
Baltimore (Maryland), The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1936, no. 20.
Paris, Gazette des beaux-arts, 1936, no. 51.
New York, Wildenstein, 1946, no. 34.
New York, Wildenstein, 1956, no. 44.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 29.
Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 43.

Provenance:
Given by Gauguin to the painter Charles Laval who returned it, presumably in 1890: see above, and Gauguin's sketchbook, **D** above.
Given by Gauguin to the painter Eugène Carrière in exchange for the portrait that Carrière made of Gauguin in March 1891; see entry, and Morice, 1919, **D** above.
Gustave Fayet, Igny, c. 1906; see **E**, and 1910 list, **D** above.
Mme d'Andoque de Sériège (by inheritance), 1925.
Mr and Mrs Huttleston Rogers, New York, 1953.
Mr and Mrs John Hay Whitney, New York.
Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon, Upperville (Virginia), 1958.
Donated by Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon in 1985 to: **Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, Collection of Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon – 1985.64.20.**

292
Young Woman at a Window

Canvas. 0.34 × 0.41
Signed, dated and dedicated lower right: *aux* [?] *Fiancés / P Go 88*
W242

Neither the location of this scene, nor the model – presumably the fiancée of the dedication – can be identified with any certainty.
But the most memorable engagement in Gauguin's circle over the summer of 1888 was undoubtedly that of Louise Marie Françoise Lamour (niece of the principal postmistress of the Pont-Aven post office, Mlle Baron) and the Breton painter Ernest Ponthier de Chamaillard (1862-1931), whose acquaintance Gauguin had made in June 1888.
Chamaillard was one of the young artists who gathered around Gauguin that summer, and Louise Lamour's rooms in rue du Gac, in the attic of a house above the post office, were one of their rallying points in 1888, though this had ceased to be the case



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by 1889. It was a place of discussion and creation; Bernard and Chamaillard are said to have decorated the walls and windows. Towards the autumn, a 'romantic elopement to the Channel Islands' was crowned, on 27 October 1888, by a 'hasty marriage in Jersey[1]'. The Chamaillard family, composed of lawyers and notabilities, considered Louise Lamour a very poor match[2].

Three children came of this marriage, Ernest, born at rue du Gac in January 1891, followed by a second son, Yves, and finally a daughter, Louise, born in 1897[3]. Chamaillard seems to have had a taste for such escapades. A Seguin letter reports that, in September 1896, he 'decamped for Paris in cycling costume with Coralie [a model who posed for O'Conor]', till Mme Chamaillard came and ordered him back to the marital home[4].

The window that frames this portrait is the same as that in *Bouquet (262)*. It can hardly have been in Louise Lamour's house, since the rue du Gac (now rue du Général de Gaulle), runs through the centre of Pont-Aven. Moreover, the sailing boats visible in the background of *Bouquet* seem to be out at sea, or least in a large estuary; they are certainly not on the narrow rapids of the River Aven, behind the house.

On the other hand, it is conceivable that the window-sill is merely a *trompe-l'oeil* forming part of the decorations painted that summer in Louise's house, which would explain its unexpected stiffness of execution and its identical appearance in the still life. This, however, remains entirely hypothetical, and the possibility of a seaside trip that produced both portrait and still life cannot be ruled out.

[1] Information provided by O. Le Bihan, author of a thesis on Chamaillard.
[2] V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, p. 503.
[3] Information kindly supplied by Monsieur Quéinec.
[4] Seguin to O'Conor, 23 June 1897.

Documents and bibliography:
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 242 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Toronto (Ontario), Art Gallery of Ontario, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, 1981, no. 49.
Tokyo, National Museum of Modern Art, and Aichi, Prefectural Art Museum, 1987, no. 23.
Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 36.

Provenance:
Private collection, Great Britain.
Allan and Nancy Miller, Solebury (Pennsylvania), 1949.
Sale, Paris, Charpentier, 17 June 1960, no. 87 (bought in).
Sale [Miller], London, Sotheby's, 4 July 1962, no. 75 (bought in).
Sale, Tokyo, Christie's, 27 May 1969, no. 302.
Samuel Josefowitz, Lausanne, c. 1981.
Sale, Paris, Drouot-Montaigne, 3 April 1990, no. 58.
Private collection.

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Portrait of a Pont-Avennoise (perhaps Marie Louarn)

Canvas. 0.33 × 0.23
W244

This memorable inhabitant of Pont-Aven, who rendered great service to the artistic colony of the town – not least that of occasionally posing for them – begins, thanks to a little cross-checking, to acquire some consistency.

'A historical personage' ■ The powerful bone-structure, high forehead and wide, protuberant lips of this face seem to be those of the woman represented around September 1889 in the celebrated woodcarving *Women, Love and You Will be Happy,*



Women, Love and You Will Be Happy (Gray 76), detail. Boston (Massachusetts), Museum of Fine Arts.



P. Sérusier: *Portrait of a Woman* (Guicheteau 4). Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archive.

Gray 76[1]. Sérusier, too, painted her portrait, in much more idealised fashion: Guicheteau I, 4, reproduced opposite. In 1906, when he presented this work to Maurice Denis, he wrote to him as follows: 'The Pont-Aven woman propped on her elbow is a historical personage: she charmed the solitude of the entire Pont-Aven school, and, what is more, she was Gauguin's model for two wood-carvings: Soyez mystérieuses and Soyez amoureuses. She did not scruple to remove her slip, but showed a respectable reluctance to remove her *coiffe*. I should be within my rights in asking 7f 35 for it. A great deal should be forgiven her, because etc., the school of Pont-Aven[2]'.

It would therefore be of considerable interest to identify Sérusier's model. Several suggestions have been made, none of which seems likely. One is Marie Poupée (that is, Marie Henry), the suggestion made by Maurice Denis, when, fifteen years after Sérusier's death, he authorised the reproduction of this portrait in a reprint of Sérusier's *ABC de la peinture*[3]. But Marie Henry would never have worn the Pont-Aven costume, as Gauguin's model does. Another suggestion, made by Marie Henry's daughter, Ida Cochennec, is Marie Lagadu (see *Portrait, 290*) – but Marie Lagadu must, in fact, be the model for *290*. Jaworska suggests Marie Derrien[4]: but this Marie was a well-known figure in Pont-Aven (see *Portrait, 290*) and is clearly recognisable by the set-



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tled radiance of her serene features and her impeccable virtue, which sets her poles apart from the promiscuous woman of Sérusier's letter, the model for this work.

A woman of easy virtue ■ The painter Delavallée offers a more direct road to the identification of this model. Chassé asked him: 'Did you know Gauguin's models?' 'Yes, I knew Marie Louarin, and here's a portait of her painted by my wife. Gauguin really appreciated her because she was the only woman in Pont-Aven who agreed to pose nude for him[5]'.
Marie Louarin (or Louarn – the latter name is much more common in the region) may therefore be the name of the woman who posed for the nude in *Soyez amoureuses*. True, Dr. Palaux has stated that a Pont-Avennoise serving-girl, Mademoiselle M.P, was Gauguin's model (see *Two Women Bathing, 241*). But the name 'Louarn' also appears in relation to the right hand figure of *Breton Women Chatting (237)*, inscribed on the back of a watercolour of that figure. And the charcoal study for that same figure shows a remarkably prominent brow and a slovenly little *coiffe* that must surely have belonged to the model for the present work (see *Breton Women Chatting*). It seems, then, that Marie, dressed from head to foot, posed for Gauguin during his first stay in Pont-Aven. Moreover, we know that, in 1892, Marie Louarn gave up modelling to become a prostitute[6], thus meeting in every particular the description given by Sérusier in his 1906 letter about the model for Gauguin's two woodcarvings (Gray 76 and 87). And is it merely coincidental that a fox – described by Gauguin as 'an Indian symbol of perversity[7]' – appears in *Soyez amoureuses*, when the Breton word for 'fox' is 'louarn'?

An emblematic figure ■ The Marie portrayed here had her own role among the Pont-Aven painters of the period. It is undoubtedly this Marie who holds centre-stage in an 1888 painting by Laval, *On the Way to Market*. She sits alongside Laval, who painted himself in Breton costume, and turns toward his companion with a meaningful gaze. She also appears in a watercolour



C. Laval: *On the Way to Market*, detail of the picture reproduced on page 437. Private collection.



É. Bernard: *Gauguin and a Pont-Aven Woman*, drawing. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

caricature by Bernard, chubby-cheeked and lips extended as though blowing, again gazed on by a man, this time by Gauguin himself.
But it was in Gauguin's work that she accumulated the greatest significance. She is an object of temptation in *Soyez amoureuses* (Gray 76), and a symbol of abandon in the wood-carving *Soyez mystérieuses* (Gray 87) and the works that preceded it, in particular *Ondine* (W336). It seems likely that it was Marie who – retaining her *coiffe*, as Sérusier noted – offered her back for the life-study (now in the collection of the Van Gogh Museum) made in preparation for *Woman with Pigs (320*, q.v.*)*. And perhaps, too, she modelled the nude bather seen from behind in *Two Women Bathing (241)* – which itself prefigures *Ondine*. She is also seen face-on in an 1889 watercolour, posing as a rather unexpected *Cow Girl* (W343), with hair hanging loose, shirt open and breasts exposed.
But Gauguin's vision of this fallen woman found perhaps its most dramatic expression in a fine drawing that combines sultriness with a sense of affliction[8]. It is also tempting to suppose that Marie's prominent forehead (very clear in the drawing) was borrowed for the imaginary personage of *Fruit (312)* and again for *Human Misery (317)* with all its later symbolic developments. All these things combine to make of this Breton woman a key figure for Gauguin, one who inhabited the borderline between his day-to-day experience and the world of his imagination.
In point of technique, this painting already resembles *Little Breton Bather (295)*; it must date from the summer, and belong among the reflections on animality then taking take more or less conscious shape in Gauguin's mind.



Head of a Woman, drawing. Photo: Christie's.

[1] Gauguin's title, *Soyez amoureuses, vous serez heureuses* is not so hectoring, specifying gender in its adjectives [Translator's note].
[2] Sérusier to Maurice Denis, 10 November 1906 (M. Denis: *Journal*, Paris, 1957, vol. II, pp. 48-49).
[3] Paul Sérusier: *ABC de la peinture*, Paris, 1946, p. 46.
[4] Marie Jaworska: *Paul Gauguin et l'école de Pont-Aven*, Paris, 1971, p. 130.
[5] C. Chassé: *Gauguin et son temps*, Paris, 1955, p. 46.
[6] B. Quénec: *Pont-Aven 1800-1914*, [Pont-Aven], 1983, p. 99.
[7] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, September 1889 (Malingue LXXXVII).
[8] Sale, New York, Christie's, 10 November 1994, no. 115.

Documents and bibliography:
A. Alexandre: *Gauguin, sa vie et le sens de son œuvre*, Paris, 1930, p. 52, repr. with the information: Fayet collection (photo Druet-Vizzavona).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 244 (repr.).
M. Bodelsen: *Gauguin's Ceramics*, London, 1964, pp. 174-175 (repr.). Bodelsen suggest that the Breton woman in this portrait should be identified with one in a drawing dedicated to Maufra. This points seems to us neither implausible nor incontrovertible.

Exhibitions:
Copenhagen, Kleis, 1917, no. 31.



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Provenance:
Gustave Fayet, Igny (in Alexandre, D above).
Bought from Louis Bernard by Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, September 1916 (no. 20637).
Sold to Halvorsen, Paris and Oslo, October 1916.
Tetzen-Lund, Copenhagen, c. 1917.
Tetzen-Lund sale, Copenhagen, Winkel & Magnussen, catalogue no. 159, May 1934, no. 3 (to G.A. Hagemann, Bjersjöholm).
Hagemann, Bjersjöholm (Sweden), c. 1964.
Sale, London, Sotheby's, 30 June 1981, no. 17.
Sale, New York, Sotheby's, 14 May 1992, no. 245.

294
Young Girl with Hat

Canvas. A handwritten note gives the dimensions as roughly:
0.46 × 0.38
Signed and dated lower right:
P Go 88

This work is known to us only via a photo in the Jacques Dubourg archives.

Provenance:
Current whereabouts unknown.



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295
Little Breton Bather

Oil on wood. 0.295 × 0.215
Signed and dated upper left: *P Go 88*

In a letter of 8 July 1888[1], Gauguin told Schuffenecker that he had just done some nudes. The pastel study of a bare torso modelled by a Pont-Avennois boy may date from around that time, and the present work was painted from the study; the boy's face is of very similar dimensions in pastel and painting.



Little Breton Boy, drawing. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

This little panel was not, then, painted from life, despite its apparent spontaneity. The extremity of its manner – the raw blue, green and red tones of the flesh (a development of the system of flesh-tones in the much earlier *Woman Sewing, 64*); the blue outline (not unexampled in this period – see *Bathers, 297*); the broad area of green in the background; the abnormal proportions of the boy's right arm (an almost traditional distortion, in which Delacroix, Degas and others had preceded Gauguin: see *Breton Women Chatting, 237*, inset) – all suggest how insistently Gauguin was pushing back the borders of Impressionist technique, without yet escaping from it. Taken together, they would seem to date the work to around July.
The painting is not only less spontaneous than it seems; it is also less anodyne. The immense, red, pointed ears – deliberately exaggerated relative to the pastel – make the boy into a child of nature. His expression at once pensive and instinct with life, he is captured as if in motion, his animal poetry on the frontiers of the real and the supernatural. This anatomical trait confers on the painting a pre-Symbolist quality answering Gauguin's very personal and increasingly explicit need to convey meaning (see inset). A slightly later vase carries two children's heads (Gray 68), which seem to draw on either the pastel or this painting.

Pointed Ears

Gauguin's *Self-Portrait (291)* discreetly exhibits red-tinged and pointed ears. And he had also made a ceramic faun with animal hooves and ears[1], which may predate the *Self-Portrait*. The repetition of the pointed ears here and in the *Portrait of Madeleine Bernard (305)* makes them not merely a component of Gauguin's personal vocabulary, but a sign of his meditation on the animal side of human nature. Significant but less than obvious in the self-portrait, poetic in the *Bather*, and already more codified in the portrait of Madeleine Bernard, these pointed ears are combined with slanting eyes in the portrait. Only the slanting eyes survive in *Fruit (312)*, a work that examines the logical extension of this pointy-eared animality: 'savagery'.

[1] Sale, London, Sotheby's, 30 November 1994, no. 114.

[1] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 8 July 1888 (Merlhès 156), quoted at length in *Wrestlers (298)*.

Documents and bibliography:
(?) Vollard Archives, 1907 diary, entry for 8 May: 'Bought from Mad.[ame] Gauguin […] 1 child portrait [along with five other works] all by Gauguin for 200 fr paid by cheque'. The figure is probably an error for FF 2,000. Loize, reconstructing Mette's Parisian visit of May 1907 (clearly on the basis of De Monfreid's notebooks), states that 'Vollard came [to De Monfreid's studio in rue Liancourt] to buy two thousand francs worth of paintings brought from Denmark, which they had had to repair, clean up and wax over several days before the visit' (J. Loize: *Les Amitiés du Peintre Georges-Daniel de Monfreid* […], 1951, p. 55).
Probably: R.S. [Richard Stiller]: 'Die Ausstellung von Paul Gauguin bei Arnold', *Dresdner Anzeiger*, 16 September 1910, p. 2: 'the Little Boy's gracious movement is charming'.

Exhibitions:
Probably: Dresden, galerie Arnold, September-October 1910, ex cat. (exhibition composed principally of works lent by Vollard). Stiller's review (**D** above) seems to indicate the presence of the current work.
Paintings from the Vollard Collection, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, 1950, no. 12.
Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 35.

Provenance:
Is this the *Child Portrait* bought by Vollard from Mette Gauguin in May 1907 (see diary, **D** above)? If so, it must have been amongst the paintings that Mette took back to Copenhagen after her 1892 visit to Paris, or those that she had sent on to her there.
Is this the *Little Boy* that seems to have belonged to Vollard around 1910 (see **E** above)?
At all events: Ambroise Vollard, till his death in 1939.
Édouard Jonas, Paris.
Bought from Jonas by G.H. Southam, Ottawa, 1950.
On the Parisian art market, c. 1995.

296
Round Dance of the Breton Girls

Canvas. 0.715 × 0.930
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 88 –
W251

This painting shares its setting – Lollichon field – and its season with *Haymaking (287)*. Since the point of view is not identical, it seems possible that both were painted from nature (cf. *Haymaking*). The low wall that runs diagonally across the painting forms a rather unnatural angle with the cottages and its position here may have been dictated by compositional requirements.
Round Dance was the earlier of the two, as we can tell from the brushwork. A letter to Theo Van Gogh tells us that it was painted shortly after mid-June: 'I am in the middle of a Breton gavotte danced by three girls amid the hay […]. This picture seems to me original and as far as the draughtsmanship goes I'm fairly content with it[1]'. It is thus the first of the compositions with figures that Gauguin attempted in early summer; it is also the one in which the Breton costume is most exactly recorded.
Two large drawings in charcoal and pastel of the little girls can be related to this painting. One of these is so similar that we can assume it was used directly for this painting; it shows the two right-hand figures full-length against a background of cottages. The figures seem to be of the same dimensions as those in the painting, and though the background cottages are barely sketched in, they are identically placed relative to the figures. However, the *coiffe* of the right-hand girl is higher and more pointed than in the painting. We know of no full-length study for the left-hand figure.
The second drawing, also with pastel highlights, shows three shoulder-length figures and seems also to be a preparatory study, since one of the aprons carries a hand-written instruction about colour, which is followed in the painting. Here too the right-hand *coiffe* is high and pointed.



Two Breton Girls, drawing. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Three Breton Girls, Half-Length, drawing. Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).

The two right-hand figures reappear, reversed, in a zincograph of 1889 (Guérin 2), where they are transposed from the first pastel and not from the painting; they reappear on the back of the *Ondine* fan of 1889 (W338).
In August, Gauguin added a sketch of the two right-hand figures to a letter to Schuffenecker without further remark[2].

One hand ■ In November 1888, in expectation of making a sale to what must have been a rather traditional art-lover, Gauguin was obliged to modify the right arm of the left-hand dancer; it was then more horizontal and culminated, close to the frame, in an exaggeratedly large hand. We know this from a series of letters from Gauguin and the Van Gogh brothers, which are set out in **D**. The large hand followed logically from the anatomical exaggeration found in *Winter (265)*, and may similarly have been inspired by Toulouse-Lautrec (see *Winter*); it was surely one of the elements that made this picture 'original' in Gauguin's eyes. X-ray examination is disappointing, and reveals almost nothing of the original disposition.
In common with Gauguin's other compositions of the early summer, the subject of this scene is children. Like *Wrestlers (298)*, it shows them in movement – a rather static movement that tends to enhance their naivety. The monumentality of the figures and the clarity with which they stand out against the background are effects frequently encountered in the early 1880s among artists seeking a way out of classical Impressionism.
On the little dog, already encountered in *Field (282)*, see that work. The theme of Breton dances was one to which the Pont-Aven school returned again and again.

[1] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh (Merlhès 151, **D**); in his *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, p. 68, note 1, Merlhès deems it subsequent to the second week of June.
[2] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 14 August 1888 (Merlhès 159).

Documents and bibliography:
Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, no doubt late June 1888 (Merlhès 151), above.
Gauguin to Schuffenecker, 14 August 1888 (Merlhès 159): sketch without remark, see above.
Letter from Theo Van Gogh to Gauguin, 13 November 1888, (Merlhès XCIII): 'I can still sell the round-dance of Breton girls, but there will be a little retouching to do. The hand of the little girl that comes to the edge of the frame looks much bigger than it seems to when you only see the canvas. The buyer would like you to revise the form of this hand without changing anything else in the painting at all. I think that won't be difficult for you and so I'm sending the canvas. He'll pay 500 fs – for the framed picture with a frame coming to around 100 fs – See if you can content him and if the deal interests you'.



Sketch in a letter to É. Schuffenecker, 14 August 1888 (Merlhès 159). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



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Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 14 November 1888 (Merlhès 181): 'I'll take care of the picture that needs retouching; obviously, the hand that reaches the frame looks very big and I thought it was necessary to balance the dance, which is S-shaped. But since these are painter's rather than a buyer's caprices, I'll do what I can to remedy or rather attenuate it. As for the 25% rather than 15 requested, I leave it entirely to your judgement and whatever you do is fine by me'.
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 20-22 November 1888 (563): 'Gauguin's picture Breton Children has arrived and the changes are very good. / But though I quite like this painting, it's just as well it's been sold, since the two he'll be sending from here [*Human Misery, 317*, and *Woman with Pigs, 320*] are miles better'.
Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, c. 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 183): 'I've just put a roll of canvases in the parcel post. 1° The dancers where I've changed the hand by lowering the arm a bit and moving the hand away from the frame a bit. The shape is only slightly modelled, otherwise it would start to look big again'.
Luc le Flâneur [probably G.-A. Aurier]: 'En quête de choses d'art', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 18 May 1889, p. 55: 'At Van Gogh's: […] A Breton round-dance amid the hay'.
Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, spring 1889 (Malingue LXXVII): among the pictures to be included in the future Volpini exhibition: '6° the round dance of the little girls'.
Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, late August 1889 (Cooper GAC 16): 'I enclose a passage from a Schuffenecker letter ['Schuff' had passed on a very low offer from the critic Champsaur for this picture in exchange for a eulogistic article]. / I badly need money at the moment but I really can't knuckle under to the demands of a journalist, especially to the cavalier way in which he offers [to pay] in articles. / […] I leave you the business of coming to whatever agreement with him you like. Or not at all. / Given what articles pay, it would be a gift for him – him of all people! / I don't know whether this painting is with you or at the exhibition'.
Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, c. 12 September 1888 (Cooper GAC 18): 'I send you letter after letter about the Champsaur business. In principle, I'm repeating what I've already told you. What you do is always right by me. / Only I'm astounded that Mr Champsaur suggests 200 f and then goes down to 150 f afterwards. Well, let's forget the past and close the deal. But obviously the reason I'm doing it is lack of money, and I consider newspaper articles worthless especially when they were not requested. Consequently, when the picture is sold I'm not asking for articles. So tell Mr Champsaur that he is completely free not to write anything. Better still, show him my letter, that's the simplest solution'.
Boussod et Valadon registers (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 91): 'Breton women dancing in a

circle – 92 × 73 – [bought from] the artist 19/09/89 [FF]400 – [sold to] Montandon 16/09/89 [FF] 500'. The fact that the sale precedes the purchase shows that the work was on deposit at the gallery.
Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 18 September 1889 (Cooper GAC 19): 'Today I received a telegram from Champsaur warning me to expect his money order tomorrow; no doubt he hopes in this way to create a situation that will embarrass you. If I don't find his address in the letter tomorrow I'll send the money order to you for return to him. In any case you can tell him that such things are not done in proper business circles and that I'm not accepting any further offers from him'.
Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, c. 21 September 1889 (Cooper GAC 20): 'I'm returning the signed receipt to you. This is a very timely deal. […] I'm glad you sold a picture to Montandon, he and Leclanché were my colleagues at a stockbroker's. Who knows, perhaps he'll bring in others'.
Unpublished letter from Laval to Émile Bernard, September or October 1889 (document exhibited at the Salon d'automne, Paris, 1978, no number): 'Gauguin gave me very good news. He has sold three landscapes and the little girls dancing in the hay'.
Gauguin to Émile Bernard, October 1889 (Malingue LXXXIX): 'You tell me a picture has been sold, I didn't know. Van Gogh has sold the little girls dancing in the hay for me. Is that it?'
Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 19-20 October 1889 (Malingue XC): 'It seems you're sulking […]. Because I snubbed Champsor*. First, his picture has been sold to Montandon for 500 and I couldn't sell it twice over. Moreover, he's a vulgar scribbler and not worth the hanging. 2° Articles do no good. You believe in them I don't. Moreover his manners on that subject were threatening and I don't like that'.
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 222: '[sold to] Montandon (Breton dance) [FF] 500'.
J. Antoine: 'Impressionnistes et synthétistes', *Art et critique*, 9 November 1889, p. 370 (on the Volpini exhibition): 'In the Round-Dance in the hay, the Young Wrestlers – Brittany […], etc. we recognise the works of a true painter, though here and there they include distortions of draughtsmanship and alterations of tone that I find disturbing'.
Vollard Archives, inventory of 1 January 1922: '[no.] 7 – Breton dance – 72 × 92 – [valued FF] 10,000'
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 251 (repr.).

Exhibitions:

Gauguin's first solo exhibition, Paris, Boussod et Valadon, November 1888: see letter from Theo Van Gogh, 13 November 1888, **D** above.
Presentation of works by Degas, Gauguin, Guillaumin, Millet, Pissarro, etc., Paris, Boussod et Valadon, May 1889: see review by Luc le Flâneur, **D** above.
Peintures du groupe impressionniste et synthétiste, Paris, Exposition universelle, Volpini premises on the Champ-de-Mars, summer 1889, no. 36 (*Round Dance in the Hay*).
Gauguin and Cézanne, London, Stafford Gallery, 1911, no. 17.
New York, Wildenstein, 1936, no. 9.
Cambridge (Massachusetts), Fogg Art Museum, 1936, no. 9.
Baltimore (Maryland), The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1936, no. 7.
Paris, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1936, no. 29.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 44 (exhibited in Washington D.C. only).
La Ronde des petites Bretonnes. Une évocation de l'art de Pont-Aven autour du chef-d'œuvre de Washington, Rennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1996-1997, no number.

Provenance:

Deposited for sale with Boussod et Valadon, c. November 1888. An unknown art-lover attempted to buy it in November 1888 (see November letters, **D** above); then the critic Félicien Champsaur made what Gauguin considered an abusive attempt to buy it (see letters August-October 1889, **D** above). The author of fairly successful works such as *Orgie latine* and *L'Arriviste* (see M. Malingue: *Lettres de Gauguin à sa femme et à ses amis*, Paris, 1946, p. 170, note 1), Champsaur was well-known in artistic circles and the founder of *Hommes d'aujourd'hui*. He was a friend of Schuffenecker, who painted a portrait of Champsaur's wife.



Félicien Champsaur. Photo: BNF.

Finally bought from Boussod on 16 September 1889 for FF 500 by Montandon, a former stockbroking colleague of Gauguin's (see Boussod register, letters of September-October 1889, and Gauguin's sketchbook, **D** above).
Vollard, c. 1922: see inventory, **D** above.
Bignou, Paris, with Reid and Lefevre, London, 1937.
William A. Cargill, Glasgow, c. 1956.
Sale of Cargill (deceased), London, Sotheby's, 11 June 1963, no. 29.
Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon, Upperville (Virginia). Donated by them to:
Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, Collection of Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon – 1983.1.19.

297
Young Breton Bathers

Canvas. 0.92 × 0.72
Signed and dated lower left:
P. Gauguin 88
W275

In a letter of 8 July 1888[1], Gauguin announced that he had recently done a few nudes. This composition with nude figures displays a manner not dissimilar to that of *Round Dance (296)*, and may there therefore have been executed around late June or early July, between *Round Dance* and *Wrestlers*.

The setting here is the Moulin Neuf bathing place, where Gauguin had painted two years before (see *221*). We know that the setting was not simply adapted from *221*, since by 1888 that *Baignade* was no longer in Gauguin's hands. He may, however, have used the sketch reproduced opposite that painting. The date of the drawing is uncertain; it comes from a sketchbook that Gauguin used in both 1886 and 1888 (see *221*).
The outline around these figures is thicker than ever. They were placed in the landscape using posed studies, of which one is known today: a large charcoal, pastel and red chalk drawing, squared up for transfer onto the canvas, and indeed very faithfully copied (it



Young Boy Standing, drawing. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des dessins, fonds du Musée d'Orsay. Photo: RMN.



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is now in the Louvre). It was probably done, like the painting, early in the summer of 1888. No study for the seated figure is known. Was there one? The posture of this child is quite similar to that of the little girl in a wood carving, *Toilette* (Gray 7, reproduced opposite *Wrestlers, 298*).

These nudes in a natural setting bring to mind Puvis de Chavannes, one of the masters whom Gauguin admired at this point. And one might also mention Degas, the subject of whose *Young Spartans* (Lemoisne 70) is faintly reminiscent of this painting, though Gauguin – probably referring above all to *Wrestlers (298)* – had declared of his recent nudes 'There's nothing Degas about them[2]'.
With its monumental figures and its use of clearly delimited and individually modulated zones (some of them of considerable refinement), this composition is close kin to *Breton Women Chatting (237)* of 1886, though here the division of the whole into large decorative planes is even more emphatic.
The exaggerated reds of the flesh tones resemble those of *Little Breton Bather (295)* and *Wrestlers (298)*. The left-hand child's right foot is strikingly large, while the strangely abrupt cut-off of the shadow falling on his left arm is an effect that reappears in *Woman with Pigs (320)*. It owes nothing to the preparatory drawing, but is

perhaps foreshadowed in the contrast between pallid body and sunburnt head in the right-hand figure of the *Two Women Bathing (241)* of 1887. The outlines here tend toward blue, in harmony with the yellow background; they might be thought to prefigure the systematic of use of Prussian blue that was soon to prevail (see *The Vision, 308* and *Little Dogs, 311*, inset).

Wrestlers, which is also set in front of the waste-weir of the Moulin Neuf, similarly depicts two child nudes (who may have been posed by the same models) and similarly makes a little still life of their clothes on the ground. The same size as the present painting, *Wrestlers* followed close on its heels, and affords a distinctly more audacious counterpart.

[1] Gauguin to Schuffenecker, 8 July 1888 (Merlhès 156, **D**), cited extensively in *Wrestlers (298)*.
[2] Merlhès 156, 8 July 1888 (**D**).

Documents and bibliography:
Gauguin to Schuffenecker, 8 July 1888 (Merlhès 156): see *Wrestlers (298)* for extracts.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 275 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
Vincent Van Gogh en zijn Tijdgenooten, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1930, no. 157.
Paris, galerie Le Portique, 1931, no. 28.
Houston (Texas), The Museum of Fine Arts, 1954, no. 7.
Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, and London, Tate Gallery, 1955, no. 21.
Oslo, Kunstnerforbundet, 1955, no. 15.
Paris, Charpentier, 1960, no. 37.
Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1960, no. 36.
Wegbereiter der modernen Malerei. Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Seurat, Hamburg, Kunstverein, 1963, no. 42.
Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Toronto (Ontario), Art Gallery of Ontario, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, 1981, no. 47 (exhibited in Amsterdam only).
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 47.

Provenance:
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 11 (*Bathers*, FF 360 to Alexandre Natanson – on whom, see *Spring at Lézaven, 279*, **P**).
Wilhelm Weinberg, Amsterdam then Scarsdale (New York), c. 1930.
Weinberg sale, London, Sotheby's, 10 July 1957, no. 24.
Purchased by the Stiftung zur Förderung der Hamburgisschen Kunststammlungen with funds provided by BAT Zigarettenfabriken, Deutsche Unilever-Gruppe and Hauniwerke Körber in 1961: on permanent loan to:
Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle – 5063.

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Young Wrestlers

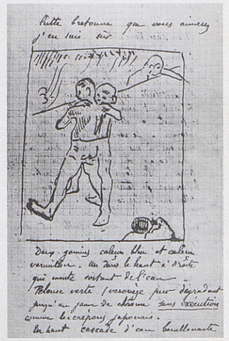
Canvas. 0.93 × 0.73
Signed and dated lower centre:
P Gauguin. 88
W273

Similar in subject and dimensions to *Young Breton Bathers (297)*, which shortly preceded it, this scene too takes place before the waste-weir of the Moulin Neuf at the same bathing place, which Gauguin had first painted in 1886 (*221*). There he had perhaps seen children practising traditional Breton *gouren*, a form of wrestling whose bouts are decided when the shoulders of one of the combatants are held flat on the ground. On local feast days, such combat took place in the Lollichon field; the bouts were of somewhat ritual character (not unlike Oriental martial arts) with the combatants rigged out in linen shirts. Old engravings and photos, along with paintings like Sérusier's *Breton Wrestling*[1], give us an idea of the atmosphere of these events[2]. Here two young Bretons held the pose while Gauguin made a large pastel study, which he then squared up and transferred to the canvas.

Two of Gauguin's letters date this work to July; each is illustrated with a sketch giving some idea of the picture. On 8 July, Gauguin told Schuffenecker: 'I am gradu-



Children Wrestling, drawing. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Sketch in a letter to Vincent Van Gogh, 24 or 25 July 1888 (Merlhès 158). Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).

ally recovering and my strength has returned – So I've done a few nudes that you'll like. And there's nothing Degas about them – / The last one is 2 kids wrestling by the river – absolutely Japanese by a ['Frenchman' crossed out] savage from Peru. / Very lightly worked green lawn with the top white[3]'. Then, writing to Vincent Van Gogh around the 24-25 July, he noted: 'I'm beginning to recover the freedom of my faculties: my illness had weakened me and in my last studies I have, I believe, exceeded anything I've done before – / […] I have just finished a Breton wrestling match that you'll like, I feel sure. / Two kids, one in blue and one in scarlet trunks. One upper right climbing up out of the water – Green grass – pure Veroneze* shading into chrome yellow without mod-



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ulation like Japanese prints. / At the top, seething waterfall white pink and a rainbow at the side near the frame. / Low down white patch a black hat and blue shirt / […] I feel the need to fight; to carve things out with clubbing blows – After all the experiments that I have just made here I think I can move ahead with ease[4]'.

Renewal and dialogue ■ Now that his strength had returned, Gauguin turned to a theme from which he could draw life: 'it was in his nature to like anything that savoured of struggle and combat', De Monfreid later noted[5]. He chose to approach this theme through the prism of childhood, which had formed the subject of *Round Dance (296)* and *Bathers (297)*. For reasons to which we shall return, he was profoundly attracted by childhood freshness.
There may also be a reminiscence here of Puvis de Chavanne's *Sweet Land*, an idyllic composition including a group of child wrestlers in similar postures. Gauguin can hardly have failed to see this painting eight



P. Puvis de Chavannes: *Sweet Country*, detail. Bayonne, Musée Bonnat.

months previously at the large Durand-Ruel exhibition of Puvis's work in late 1887. The *Vision (308)* of two months later reverts to the theme of struggle and wrestling in a very different mode.The ambience of lively communication surrounding the birth of this canvas offers a striking comparison with that of the solitary landscapes painted in early 1888. With the approach of summer, the exchange of letters between Gauguin and Van Gogh intensified. Vincent Van Gogh was at the heart of that little avant-garde defined by the exhibition at the Grand-Bouillon restaurant (see introductions to the winter of 1887-1888 and to this period), and in June, Gauguin received no fewer than four letters from him.The present work was thus conceived in a context combining solitude and dialogue, and not the least interesting aspect of it is the way in which it defines Gauguin's own very personal solution to the group's increasingly collective programme of research. Moreover, it is obvious that this picture – which he deemed 'absolutely Japanese by a savage from Peru' – constituted a huge step forward for Gauguin[6].

Japanese ■ Of course, Gauguin was in direct contact with a milieu devoted to the art of the Far East (see *Sèvres, 214*, and *Still Life with Horse's Head, 216*, 1886). But this is the first time, to our knowledge (after the discreet clue offered earlier in the year by *Still Life with Japanese Print, 260*) that he had explicitly referred to Japan; Van Gogh's devotion to Japanese art (see inset) had no doubt helped to reinforce his own growing interest.The aspect of this composition that Gauguin deemed so very Japanese was no doubt the verticalisation of its space, which he had taken to such extremes in the past only when using a bird's-eye view; the decentred composition and elevated horizon, where the diagonal of the bank is a stylised replacement of the river's edge in *Bathers (297)*; and the simplified surfaces, which he describes as 'without modulation like Japanese prints'. Note also how the relief of the grass is smoothed out. The colours too are simplified; the use of these basics – blue, red and green – was in line with the ideas of Van Gogh and the *cloisonnistes* (see still life *259* and inset on 'Popular Imagery…').But the *japonisme* sought by Gauguin was not that of his young colleagues (see inset on 'Van Gogh and the Transition…'). The rendering of atmosphere, three-dimensional modelling of the figures and the relative modulation of colour remain Impressionist, while the rendering of space is still that of first-wave '*japonisme*', of which *Wrestlers* may be accounted an extreme example; the ground rises up strongly, but it still forms an acute angle with the figures. (This was already a common effect, of which Pissarro, for example, had made fairly radical use in his *Little Country Maid*, Pissarro-Venturi 575, of 1882). In the next stage, that angle would be eliminated, as the ground rose up to meet the surface of the painting.



C. Pissarro: *Young Country Maid* (Pissarro-Venturi 575). London, Tate Gallery.

Van Gogh and the Transition to Second-Wave Japonisme

The effects borrowed from the Japanese by the generation of Degas and the Impressionists lay primarily in spatial effects and layout: layering of depth, raised horizons, overhead viewpoints, asymmetrical compositions, cut-off foregrounds, and so on. Gauguin followed in their footsteps, for example in *Still Life with Laval's Profile (238)*, certain Martinique scenes, and various views of the River Aven *(223, 278,* and *285)*.
The Post-Impressionist generations took from the Japanese flat surfaces, even colour, the abolition of the third dimension, stylisation of form, and a preference for decorative line and rhythm. This distinction was first established by Needham; Berger, in his wake, has given us an in-depth analysis of the transition between 'first-wave' spatial and 'second-wave' decorative *japonisme*.
This transition coincides with the end of the pictorial cycle inaugurated by the Renaissance and the start of a new phase of modern art[1].

In Gauguin's circle, the prime mover in promoting this tendency was, of course, Van Gogh, who was a devotee of Japanese prints and possessed a great number of them. He had introduced Bernard and Anquetin to this art, taking them to Bing's in spring 1887, and thus encouraging (if not indeed placing) them on their 'Japanese' road to Cloisonnisme. Bernard later described Anquetin's *cloisonniste* painting *Boat* as a 'big Japanese print[2]'.
True, Van Gogh himself held back from the use of these carefully outlined areas of flat colours – the *aplat cloisonné* – during the first half of 1888. But in his letters, he constantly remarks on Japanese methods: 'limpid atmosphere […] joyous colour-effects[3]'; 'grasp what's essential in drawing […] spaces bordered by outlines expressed or implied […] with simplified colours to fill them[4]'; 'Japanese-style simplification of colour […]. The Japanese ignore reflected colour, laying down flat colours one next to the other, defining form and movement with characteristic traits[5]'; 'nothing but pure colours[6]'. 'All my work is partly based on *japonaiserie*', he concluded[7]. Though Van Gogh's letters to Gauguin of this period are lost (see introduction to this section), their content cannot have been very dissimilar.

It must nevertheless be said that *Wrestlers* is a less perfect embodiment of these ideas than the *Cloisonniste* paintings by Bernard and Anquetin (for example, Anquetin's *Avenue de Clichy*, reproduced opposite the *Still Life, Fête Gloanec, 301*) – which Gauguin himself had seen at the Grand-Bouillon exhibition of late 1887.

[1] G. Needham: 'Japonisme. Influence on French Painting', pp. 115-131 of the catalogue of the *Japonisme* exhibition at the Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975; K. Berger: *Japonismus…*, Munich, 1980, English edition, 1992.
[2] Émile Bernard: 'Louis Anquetin artiste peintre', *Mercure de France*, 1 November 1932, p. 262.
[3] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 18 March 1888 (B2).
[4] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 9 April 1888 (B3).
[5] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 6 June 1888 (B6).
[6] Vincent Van Gogh to his sister Wilhelmine, 16 June 1888 (W4).
[7] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 15 July 1888 (510).

Distorting Space

Maltreating perspective ■ Classical perspective no longer met the requirements of the time. Some had already begun maltreating it, for example, Cézanne; around 1880, his volumes and surfaces, simplified to the point of distortion but subtly integrated into the surface of the picture, tended toward the truncation of space. Gauguin, following in his footsteps, had distorted the roads of Pontoise and certain Breton hillsides (see introductions to the period 1879-1883 and to the 1886 Breton campaign).



V. Van Gogh: *Trinquetaille Bridge* (F426). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Hyperbole ■ In contrast with these distortions, where the emphasis on the surface of the work frequently minimised the representation of depth, other experiments tended to emphasise it.
Ten years earlier, Caillebotte had painted 'scientific' perspectives, using wide-angle photographic effects that exaggerated the convergence of horizontal lines. It was no doubt in the wake of such effects that, in the late 1880s, several similar experiments were attempted, creating very dynamic spaces. One such is Toulouse-Lautrec's *Cirque Fernando* (reproduced opposite the still life *259*); the horse is seen in exacerbated perspective, its vast hoofs and tail reaching out to the edge of the picture. We know that Gauguin had had the opportunity to see this picture (see *Winter, 265*); and perhaps the minuscule figure and exaggerated hands and feet of *Round Dance (296)* and *Wrestlers* in some degree partake of this tendency.
In June 1888, Van Gogh too produced some paintings exhibiting dynamic, convergent spaces: *Trinquetaille Bridge* and *Roubine du Roi Canal* (F426 and 427).



V. Van Gogh: *Still Life with Plaster Statuette* (F360). Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum Collection.



V. Van Gogh: *The Roubine du Roi [Canal]* (F427). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Undercutting space ■ In these works, painters attempted in varying degrees to combine horizontal distortion with the contemporary quest for a *japoniste* verticalisation of space.
But when we find – as in *Wrestlers* – excessive verticalisation combined with decentring, the dynamic effect normally produced by the former ceases to operate. Instead, an alarming and very modern effect results, in which space seems to collapse as though undercut. In December 1887, Van Gogh had painted a *Still Life with Plaster Statuette* (F360) in which, no less than the subject – a female nude and two novels about sexuality – the shifting, sloping distorted space suggested a perilous slippage and loss of control; whether Gauguin had seen it, we do not know.
The firmly constructed and subtly contrasted space of *Wrestlers* is clear evidence of Gauguin's dexterity in the manipulation of space. Is it a matter for regret that he took it no further? At all events, Synthetism, in turning away from the third dimension, put an end to these experiments (see the *Fête Still Life, Gloanec, 301*, inset 'Diagrammatic space').

Bare Forked Creature

Nudes are relatively rare in Gauguin's corpus before the Tahitian period, and for the most part present the human form in a rather unflattering light. Some, like *Woman Sewing (64)*, the red-haired bather of *241*, or the heroine of *Woman with Pigs (320)* display an emphatic carnality; others, less mature, show sickly physiques arranged in poses of childish or adolescent gaucherie. The latter include the young girl of the wood-carving *Toilette* (Gray 7, 1882), the second of the two women bathers in *241*, the wrestlers here, the *Little Breton Boy* of W339 and the young girl of *Lost Maidenhead* (W412). Only one oil-sketch of the 1880s – *157* – offers a chaste and poetic vision of youthful nudity.
The exaggerated thickness of the young wrestlers' feet both confirms the anti-academic tendency of *Wrestlers* and emphasises the uncouth nature of these simple beings; it was soon to establish itself as an index of primitivism.
This primitivism was still imbued with sadness in the sombre children of Le Pouldu that Gauguin painted around 1890, a sadness that he ultimately threw off only in his paintings of the solid, harmonious Tahitian physique. In the latter, acceptance of the need for contact with the soil transpires as clearly as the need itself, finally allowing Gauguin to celebrate the physical, though the vision he creates still tends toward the chaste.

the time, and that some saw in it a profitable route out of Impressionism (see inset on 'Distorting Space').

Gravity, subjectivity, and the abyss ■ There is an agreeably tactile quality here, one not infrequently found in Gauguin's paintings (for example, in the Breton landscape *231* or *Breton Woman with Pitcher*, *267*); he was, after all, not only a painter but a sculptor and potter too. Here it renders this astonishing space still more credible. It *is* an astonishing space. And it is the more original in that – after the massy body of *Woman Sewing (64)*, the unexpected distortions of the portrait of *Clovis (208)*, the gulf that opens at the feet of the *Breton Woman with Pitcher (267)* and which has, in *Flageolet Player* (W361), become a veritable abyss – it confirms Gauguin's interest in spatial depths and the lower extremities of forms.The distortion here is not one of those truer-than-life transformations that Gauguin so much admired in certain masters old and new (see *Breton Women Chatting*, *237*, inset on 'Distortion'). Nor is it the kind of optical effect in which Caillebotte had led the way. This distortion is primarily expressive; it is a representation less of the external world than of an individual sensibility. And by imposing a personal vision, it clears the way for what the Aurier, referring to more stylised forms of art, later called 'subjective distortion' (see the *Vision*, *308*, inset on Synthetism, 'An inter-

'Savage' and Primitive

In January 1888, Gauguin declared himself 'Indian'[1]; in July, a 'savage from Peru'[2]; and in November as 'inclining to a primitive state' and a 'savage'[3]. He adopted clogs and a Breton waistcoat, and soon after bestowed his fur coat on Schuffenecker, telling him 'I'm finished with elegance'[4].
From 1888 on, Gauguin was increasingly willing to assert his Amerindian origins. The following year, he told Theo Van Gogh: 'You know I have Indian, Inca blood in me, and it comes across in everything I do. It's the basis of my whole character. / I'm looking for something more natural to set against the corruption of civilisation, with savagery as my starting point'[5]. This was a very totalising state of mind, implying a way of life, a verdict on civilisation, an artistic direction and an inner quest, all subsumed in the need for revitalization.

The native state ■ For society was increasingly oppressive (see inset on the modern world). To escape what Huysmans described as this 'American prison', people were increasingly receptive to worlds still uncorrupted by modern civilisation: those of primitive society and childhood.
A simple 'savage' life would enable one to recover natural perception and unity with nature; hence Gauguin's Breton campaigns and, more particularly, his sojourn in Martinique. Contact with archaic or primitive civilisations was needed; with rugged Brittany living in the shadow of its archaic beliefs, and soon with all the many distant societies steeped in the primordial; colonisation and world fairs were gradually acquainting the 19th century with such cultures (see *Vision, 308*, inset on 'Other civilisations'). Gauguin had spent his own early childhood in Peru, and a trace of Amerindian blood perhaps ran in his veins; he was well placed to turn his attention to less 'civilised' societies.

And it was time to return to the primitive mentality of childhood. Gauguin made childhood his subject in Pont-Aven in 1888, and still more so in Le Pouldu over the following few years; it soon after inspired him with a new artistic approach (see *Little Dogs, 311*, inset on naïve painting).

The 'wild man': Eden or savagery ■ But the burden weighing on human vitality was not exclusively social. The inmost self, too, sought to restore its strength and recover its purity. A generalised idealism often inhabited the primitivist aspirations of the time, manifesting itself in a variety of ways (see the *Vision, 308*, inset 'Positivism and the Ideal'); but it was Gauguin, with his powerful streak of idealism and introspection, who gave to the word 'savage' (he wanted it inscribed on his tomb) its most profound and intimate sense. Thus, during his 1887 trip, he rediscovered in himself a state of almost Edenic inner perfection, which rendered law superfluous (see introduction to his stay in Martinique). And he soon afterwards came to feel the need for a purely introspective way of working: he wanted to bring to the surface the inner 'savage' who despised laws (see *Fruit, 312*) and was unafraid to destroy the false and the inadequate.

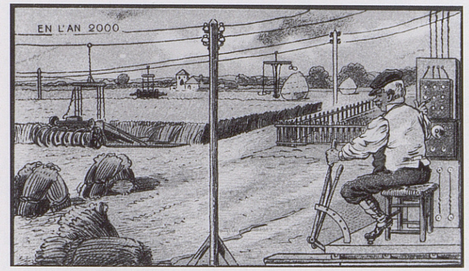
Wrestlers is one of the first conscious manifestations of this primitivist quest, which was soon to find stylistic expression in Synthetism; there it played a decisive role (see the *Vision*, inset on Synthetism).

[1] Gauguin to Mette, c. 22 January 1888 (Merlhès 139).
[2] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 8 July 1888 (Merlhès 156, **D**).
[3] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, 3rd week of November, and 24 November 1888 (Merlhès 182 and 184).
[4] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 16 October 1888 (Merlhès 172).
[5] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, November 1889 (Cooper GAC 22).

The Modern World

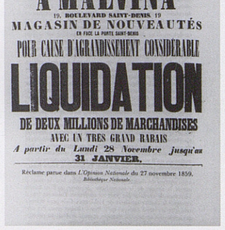
Gauguin was up in arms not just about an art starved of vitality but about an entire way of life and cast of thought. As early as the Exposition universelle of 1867, the Goncourt brothers had noted 'the Americanisation of France, the priority of industry over art […] in a word, the Federation of Matter'[1]. The Second Empire and the Republic saw the irresistible rise of the industrial, financial and technological civilisation that was to dominate the 20th century.
Modern inventions already had considerable impact on everyday life by the 1880s. There was street lighting, provided by electric bulbs, which, said the Goncourts, 'cast a funereal glimmer over things'[2]. There were telephones, lifts and trams (the latter still stream-driven, but the spectacular Exposition internationale d'électricité of 1881 had offered glimpses of other forms of traction). There were 'couchettes' in trains, and 'a sort of piano' that printed: the typewriter[3].
Comfort and hygiene were beginning to prevail: riser-mains and gas water-heaters were increasingly common, water-meters and toilets were compulsory in new constructions, and every household was supplied with a dustbin.
The old Paris gave way to the vast new Haussmannian city, all straight lines, its stone still pristine white, and its rents set high enough to exclude the poor. During the 1870s and 1880s, skating rinks and heated swimming pools were built (the earliest pools had artificial current-effects to imitate river-swimming). Contact with nature was increasingly mediatised, foreshadowing the world to come.

Big business ■ The rise of large-scale capitalism in France was a product of the Second Empire; limited companies flourished under its newly liberalised legislation and powerful merchant banks were brought into being with state assistance. Production was on an increasingly large scale: 'we live in a new world, where the conditions of existence have changed', Edmond de Goncourt noted in 1880. 'Once upon a time a tinsmith earned 6 francs a day […] he saved his 5,000 francs over five years and could set up on his own… Nowadays, you need 800,000 francs to set up a hollow-ware manufacture… so there's no way for the worker to rise […] Do you know how much money went into founding the biggest chemicals company under Louis-Philippe? […] 60,000 francs. Today, if you go to Salleron, he'll want 15,000 francs for a flue… a furnace with no trimmings comes to 50,000 francs […] to found a confectioner's, you need some 1,200,000 francs capital… a grocery, do you know the Potin company'?'
There must, then, have been ample capital underpinning for the grocery chain Félix Potin, one of the first of its kind, which survived into the 1990s.
Under the Second Empire, world fairs acquired ritual status as celebrations of industrial progress, while, in the words of Dumas *fils*, the Bourse 'became […] what the cathedral had been to the Middle Ages'[5].
Speculation entered the art world: 'The art-loving bankers of today run auctions rather than race horses. It doesn't matter what they're selling: a piece of porcelain, a canvas, a piece of paper', the Goncourts noted in 1866[6]; in their view 'this lust for auctions, for the products of the art industry, is a clear indication of a society's materialism'[7]. Money was the dominant factor in life, as authors like Vallès, Dumas *fils* and Zola testified[8]. Young ladies received account books as wedding presents.



A Very Busy Farmer, vignette in the series 'In the Year 2000', c. 1900. Photo: Kharbine-Tapabor.

The masses ■ Business methods were changing. To avoid 'wasting time between purchases', 'the bookshop no longer has chairs […] Now you stand to buy books', the Goncourts complained in 1867[9]. Department stores rationalised their methods: in came bulk purchases, reduced margins, and price labels. In the cities, advertising was now a power to reckon with. During the 1860s, crowds flocked to 'clearance' and liquidation sales from eight in the morning till ten at night (such were the opening hours of the time); these events were announced with a storm of publicity that sometimes included spurious claims about reductions.
Publicity occupied an ever-growing place in society. Gauguin, as we know from his letter of April 1884, had nothing but contempt for it[10]. An example is the 'Barnum's circus'-style publicity employed by *Le Voltaire* in 1881, when it serialised Edmond de Goncourt's *La Faustin*. 'Posters of every colour and dimension cover the walls of Paris, and everywhere, spelled out in enormous letters: *LA FAUSTIN*. On the railway, a painted hoarding measuring 40 x 2.75 metres. This morning, the relevant issue of *Le Voltaire*, with a print-run of 120,000, is given away to passers-by. Also this morning, a chromolithograph of one of the scenes of the novel was distributed on the boulevards; 10,000 were printed and the distribution is to last a whole week'[11].
The financial, industrial and commercial *grande bourgeoisie* reigned supreme, but, from the Second Empire on, there was a new social mobility for persons of popular birth and modest income: shopkeepers, artisans, and foremen on the one hand, and, on the other, clerical employees, the pen-pushers of the banks and railways, and the 'white-collar workers' of the civil service (which was expanding rapidly during the 3rd Republic). They were soon granted the right to vote. Avid for respectability, this *petite bourgeoisie* followed in the footsteps of high society: 'for the first time I have seen humble folk in the street carrying potted palms, giving exotic plants as New-Year's gifts', one of the Goncourt noted with astonishment toward the end of the Second Empire[12]. Such people dressed in bourgeois fashions and frequented the cafés-concerts and dance halls. Their aspiration to 'equality in pleasure', in Goncourt's words of 1884[13], foreshadowed the leisure and consumer societies.
Well before the World Cups and giant screens of the 20th century, the France-America billiards contest was made available to the Parisian crowds: 'For five whole days […] every evening, in the place de l'Opéra, the crowd's eyes […] were glued to the transparent frames on which the points were marked. People yelled and applauded […] bets were made via the transatlantic cable; and in fashionable salons, young women with celestial eyes demanded in anguished tones of men returning from the club: "Do you know who won tonight? Solsson or Vignaux?"'[14]
And thus began mass civilisation with its attendant communications and entertainments. Tensions arose as a result of these changes: social tensions, inevitably, but also spiritual tensions in a society gradually losing its Christian faith, in which the



Advertisement in *L'Opinion nationale*, 27 November 1859. Photo: BNF.

materialist episteme was founded in a positivist mentality hostile to metaphysical speculation. And there were psychic tensions, too, in those nostalgic for the old relation to nature, those who perceived how the prevailing materialism blinded humanity to its deepest needs by smothering them in abundance (see *Vision, 308*, inset on 'Positivism and idealism', and *Little Dogs, 311*, inset on naïve painting). 'Barbarity is required, every four or five hundred years, to restore life to the world', the Goncourts wrote, as early as 1855: 'Civilisation would be the death of the world[15]'. This need for the essential, this reaction against the power of the system was precisely what motivated Gauguin. The swing back toward primitivism necessarily continued for as long as the



Publicity-Balloons, from A. Robida: *Le Vingtième Siècle*, Paris, 1883. Photo: Bibliothèque Saint-Geneviève, Paris.

society that inspired it; both were durable phenomena whose trajectories encompassed the entire 20th century.

[1] E. and J. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 16 January 1867.
[2] E. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 20 July 1881.
[3] E. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 18 December 1886.
[4] E. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 25 August 1880.
[5] In A. Plessis: *De la fête impériale au mur des Fédérés*, Paris, 1979, p. 99.
[6] E. and J. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 11 April 1866.
[7] E. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 26 February 1875.
[8] J. Vallès: *L'Argent*, 1857; A. Dumas *fils*: *La Question d'argent*, 1857; E. Zola: *L'Argent*, 1890.
[9] E. and J. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 2 January 1867.
[10] Gauguin to Camille Pissarro, April 1884 (Merlhès 45).
[11] E. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 31 October 1881.
[12] E. and J. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 1 January 1869.
[13] E. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 28 September 1884.
[14] Guy de Maupassant: 'Les Scies', *Le Gaulois*, 8 February 1882.
[15] E. and J. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 2 September 1855.

largely in the choice of a rustic, Breton subject: a subject born of a land still commonly perceived as primitive, in which Gauguin sought to rediscover himself far from industrial and bourgeois society (see introduction to this period and inset 'The Modern World'). It is also a subject involving both childhood, which had interested Gauguin since June (see *Round Dance, 296* and *Bathers, 297*), and very simple activities such as wrestling and climbing out of the water. And it is, finally, archaicising in its very clumsiness – was wrestling ever so static, so devoid of aggression? – and in the awkwardness of these bodies. In this work, where the sickly appearance of the models is redeemed only by their naivety, Gauguin's approach to the human body is (as usual – see inset on 'Anatomies') not remotely triumphal.

Primitivism in the air ■ Stuckey observes that the large feet displayed by these wrestlers can be found in a number of archaic and Asiatic sculptures[7]. But there is no clear proof that Gauguin was interested in non-European primitive arts as early as 1888, so no direct influence can be inferred. Moreover, feet of enhanced size already feature in the wood carving, *Toilette*, of 1882.



Toilette (Gray 7), wood carving. Current whereabouts unknown. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

But perhaps this effect nonetheless reflected a still vague but quite general inclination toward less polished and more rough-hewn forms of art (see the *Vision, 308*, inset on 'Other Civilisations'). Gauguin's interest in the static and the archaic was not, after all, a solitary one; the fixity of Seurat's figures in *Bathers* and *La Grande Jatte* is both much earlier and much more intensive than



P. Cézanne: *Bather with Arms Spread* (Venturi 549). Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Gauguin's here, and this is not, perhaps, unrelated to Seurat's familiarity with Egyptian statuary.

Cézanne's independence was integral to the man, and his 'naivety' was probably drawn exclusively from his own resources; certainly, he had considerably anticipated Gauguin in his firmly-planted *Bather with Outspread Arms* (Venturi 549, c. 1877-1878), whose dreaming and uncouth nudity stands immobile in mid-gesture. That work seems to relate to the primitivism of *Wrestlers* rather in the way that Cézanne's portrait of his son Paul (Venturi 535) had to Gauguin's portrait of *his* son, *Clovis (208)*. Was the Cézanne *Bather* one of those works in which Gauguin had, as early as 1885, discerned a 'parabolic sense' (see *Apples, Jug, 144*, inset)?

A world within ■ *Wrestlers* itself is clearly more than a simple genre scene; with its primitivist purport, it becomes, like *Two Women Bathing (241)* a pre-Symbolist work. But in its expression of Gauguin's inner world, it quite exceeds *Two Women Bathing*. Here the emphasis is on the soul: in the inwardness of the spatial vision, with its verticality, subjectivity, and disquieting downward momentum; in the deliberate clumsiness of the rather sickly protagonists; in the strange and wilful fixity of this scene in which only the seething water and tilting earth suggest movement; and in the enig-

matic play of the boys' eyes. Here a soul's discomfort is revealed, with all its wounds, eccentricities, hostilities and refinements: a modern soul, aware that unity with pure spirit is beyond its reach. If the primary task of Symbolism was expression of the soul, this work is wholly in sympathy with it.

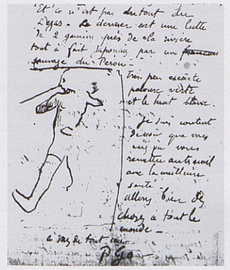
Yet there is nothing decadent in this work's pre-Symbolism. The aspiration to purity is intact: the disquiet that transpires is outweighed by the graphic and volumetric beauty of the work, the luminosity of certain zones, the artist's tenderness towards his protagonists, and his assertion of their naïve simplicity. It as if Gauguin sought to present malady and remedy all in one.

Gauguin repeated the central group in *299*, no doubt, because he was so proud of this work.

[1] Sérusier: *Breton Wrestling*, Musée d'Orsay.
[2] Examples can be found in Delouche (**D**) and in M. Thersiquel, R. Le Bihan, C. Puget: *Mémoire de Pont-Aven 1860-1940*, Pont-Aven, Société de peinture de Pont-Aven, 1986, pp. 104-105.
[3] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 8 July 1888 (Merlhès 156, D).
[4] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 24-25 July 1888 (Merlhès 158, D).
[5] G.-D. de Monfreid: 'Paul Gauguin', *La Revue provinciale*, November 1903, p. 384.
[6] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 8 July 1888 (Merlhès 156, D).
[7] C. Stuckey: 'L'énigme des pieds coupés', *Actes du colloque Gauguin* […] *1989*, Paris, 1991, p. 58, note 20.

Documents and bibliography:

Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 8 July 1888 (Merlhès 156): sketch after the wrestlers, below; text cited in commentary above.
Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 24 or 25 July 1888 (Merlhès 158): sketch of the entire composition, see p. 418, text cited in commentary above.



Sketch in a letter to É. Schuffenecker, 8 July 1888 (Merlhès 156). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

List sent to O. Maus in late 1888, giving the prices asked for the works to be exhibited at les XX (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): Gauguin asked FF 800 for this painting.
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), pp. 72-73: lists made in preparation for the exhibition of les XX – p. 72, first list: '[no.] 30 [canvas] Wrestlers'; p. 73: '[no.] 6 Wrestlers [FF] 800'.
Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, spring 1889 (Malingue LXXVII): among the canvases to appear in the Volpini exhibition: '10° The two children wrestling'.
J. Antoine: 'Impressionnistes et synthétistes', *Art et Critique*, 9 November 1889, p. 370: 'In the Round-Dance in the Hay, the Young Wrestlers – Brittany […], etc. we recognise the works of a true painter, though here and there they include distortions of draughtsmanship and alterations of tone that I find disturbing, and which, in other works, where they are more pronounced, do real damage to Monsieur Gauguin's indisputable talent'.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Vollard Archives: A. Vollard to M. Makowsky of the magazine *Apollon*, 24 Moïka, St. Petersburg, 23 January 1912: Vollard gives the sales prices of the Gauguin works that he has sent to the St. Petersburg exhibition; these include 'little wrestlers twelve thousand francs'.
Vollard Archives: inventory of 1 January 1922: 'no. 5 – Children Wrestling – oil – 92 × 73'.
H. Dorra: 'Émile Bernard and Paul Gauguin, *GBA*, April 1955, pp. 234-237.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 273 (repr.).
W. Andersen: *Gauguin's Paradise Lost*, New York, 1971, pp. 53, 281 (repr., with *Sweet Country* by Puvis de Chavannes, Andersen having been amongst the first to point to the resemblance between these groups of figures).
V. Jirat-Wasiutynksi: *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1975), microfilm version, 1993, pp. 130-138, 278-281.
D. Delouche: 'Le thème de la lutte', *Actes du colloque Gauguin* […] *1989*, Paris, 1991, pp. 157-159 (repr.).

Exhibitions:

6e exposition des XX, Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, February 1889, no. 6 (*Budding Wrestlers [Lutteurs en herbe]*).
Peintures du groupe impressionniste et synthétiste, Paris, Exposition universelle, Volpini premises on the Champ-de-Mars, summer 1889, no. 40 (*Young Wrestlers, Brittany)*.
Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
Probably: *Nus*, Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, May 1910, no. 42 (*Young Persons Wrestling)* – the following exhibition seems to prove that this work belonged to Bernheim; whereas no. 299, another possible identification with no. 42 of the May 1910 exhibition, then belonged to Durrio.
Probably: *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, London, Grafton Galleries, November 1910-1911, no. 36 (*Children*, lent by Bernheim-Jeune; presumably this was the picture also exhibited by Bernheim the previous May).
Exposition centennale de l'art français, St. Petersburg, Institut français, 1912, no. 110.
Art français des XIXe et XXe siècles, Prague, Manes gallery, 1923, no. 182: *Nude Children*, 76 × 95, owned by Vollard.
London, Leicester Galleries, 1924, no. 64.
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 35 or 39 (depending on the edition).
Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 25.
Gauguin et ses amis, Paris, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1934, no. 60bis.
New York, Wildenstein, 1936, no. 2.
Cambridge (Massachusetts), Fogg Art Museum, 1936, no. 6.
Baltimore (Maryland), The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1936, no. 4.
Paris, Gazette des beaux-arts, 1936, no. 24.
Eugène Carrière et le symbolisme, Paris, Orangerie, 1949-1950, no. 186.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1966, no. 8.
Cincinnati (Ohio), Cincinnati Art Museum, 1971, no. 16.
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental Maurice Denis 'Le Prieuré', 1985, no. 67.
Tokyo, National Museum of Modern Art, and Aichi, Prefectural Art Museum, 1987, no. 28.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 48.
Gauguin and the School of Pont-Aven, United States, 1994-1995, no. 5.
Gauguin and the School of Pont-Aven, Künzelsau, Museum Würth, 1997, no. 5.
Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 34.

Provenance:

Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 21 in the catalogue, no. 22 in the auctioneer's book: *Wrestlers*, 250f to Alfred Natanson (who lived at 85 rue Jouffroy and bought *Woman with Pigs, 320*, at the same sale).
Probably: Bernheim-Jeune, c. 1910; see **E** above.
Vollard, c. 1912.
Mme de Galea, Paris
Christian de Galea, Paris.
Nathan Cummings, New York, 1962.
Josefowitz collection, 1980.
Private collection.



299

299
Children Wrestling

Oil on wood. 0.335 × 0.240
W274

Making light of the rough surface of the wood, Gauguin's fluency of line suggests that this is a repeat of *298* rather than a preliminary study, a suggestion confirmed by the fact that the children's heads are nestled against each other as they are in *298*; in the large pastel study reproduced opposite *298*, the children's heads are apart.
This is, moreover, what we have learnt to expect; Gauguin's working methods had become much more systematic since 1886 – see *Breton Shepherdess (233)*, insets – and the large figures in his figure-paintings are first seen not as little painted sketches, but as large drawings, which are then often squared up for transfer to the pictures (see *Breton Women Chatting, 237*, for an example of this).

Probably Gauguin sought to fix the memory of a composition with which he was particularly satisfied in this little repeat; he had earlier in 1888 done the same for *Winter (265)* in *266*. See also *Quarries (86)*, inset on repeats.

Documents and bibliography:
C. Amiet: 'Erinnerungen aus meiner pariser Zeit', *Neue Schweizer Rundschau*, May 1946, p. 248: 'And was it not an extraordinary stroke of luck that, forty years later, I should have found, not far from where we live, at Koppingen, the study for Gauguin's *Wrestlers*, painted on a panel of the *pension* Gloanec door? A work I would have given anything to possess, and which I was thus able to buy' (German original).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 274 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Salon d'automne, Paris, 1906, no. 98: *Children*, Durrio collection (identification confirmed by the existence of a Druet-Vizzavona photograph taken in all probability during this exhibition at the same time as those of other works in the Durrio collection).
Paris, Association Paris-Amérique latine, 1926, no. 6 (F. Durrio collection).
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 36 or 40, depending on the edition (F. Durrio collection).
Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 26 (F. Durrio collection).
The Durrio Collection of Works by Gauguin, London, Leicester Galleries, 1931, no. 73.
Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group, London, Tate Gallery, 1966, no. 9.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1966, no. 9.

Provenance:
According to the much later testimony of the painter Cuno Amiet (see **D** above), this little painting decorated a panel of the door of the Gloanec *pension* when he stayed there in 1892. Yet the work was certainly in the hands of the sculptor Paco Durrio early in the 20th century (Durrio received some of Gauguin's Parisian studio leavings). It is difficult to see how the work could have reached Durrio from the *pension*. Even if the Gloanec family had sold certain works to Parisians, Durrio seems to have been too indigent to buy anything (an exchange cannot be ruled out). So it is quite possible that Amiet's memories are inaccurate.
In any case: Paco Durrio, Paris, c. 1906, until the late 1920s.
Acquired by Lichtenhahn, Basel, 1930.
Cuno Amiet, Oschwand, Switzerland, c. 1946; still belonged to him in 1961.
Private collection, Switzerland.



Turkeys, Pont-Aven (283), detail. ▶



Collaboration, Dialogue and Revolution (Pont-Aven, August-October 1888)

Six months of solitude had taken Gauguin as far as *Wrestlers (298)*, a work of relatively unified surfaces, daring spatial effects, and intensely personal distortions, primitivist in import and introspective in tenor.
But it still rendered both atmosphere and three-dimensionality, and though Gauguin had encountered the very 'synthetic' works of Bernard and the Cloisonniste experiments of Anquetin at the Grand-Bouillon exhibition of late 1887 (see Introduction to Gauguin's Parisian winter of 1887-1888), the draughtsmanship of *Wrestlers* does not bear the mark of their bold simplifications of outline.

In August, everything changed. Pont-Aven began to hum with activity: 'The painters detained in Paris by the Salon and the weather are arriving [...] in large groups. Ladies predominate [...] In the resplendent Bois d'Amour,' the *Union agricole et maritime*[1] informs us, 'one sees nothing but sunshades and canvases'. It adds the striking remark: 'All schools are admirably represented, *even the primitive school of Japan*'.

Could this refer to the very radical experiments by the young Émile Bernard, who arrived at approximately this juncture, probably a few days before 15 August? We have Menpes' authority[2] for the sensation his work caused in the artistic milieu. One thing is certain: Bernard's presence gave a remarkable new impulse to Gauguin's experimentation, triggering a period of unprecedented stylistic upheaval. Just as Van Gogh desired (see introduction to the first part of Gauguin's Pont-Aven campaign), there was a collective dimension to this: the three-way discussion between Gauguin, Bernard and Van Gogh proved decisive.

A stimulating young man ■ Émile Bernard was only twenty years old, but prodigiously gifted and unreservedly committed to the avant-garde. He arrived with a number of striking pictures: 'Young Bernard', Gauguin reported, 'has brought interesting things back from Saint-Briac. There's a fellow who's not afraid of anything[3]'. What those 'interesting things' were we do not know but they may well have resembled the impressively stylised Breton landscapes catalogued by Luthi as 131 and 132, the second of which, at any rate, Bernard claimed to have painted at Saint-Briac[4]. And the famous *Breton Women in the Meadow* (Luthi 114, reproduced on p. 458), painted under his very eyes in September 1888, immediately drew Gauguin into the orbit of its 'brutality'.

Bernard also brought new ideas to the table. Certain contemporary accounts give us some notion of them. Bernard had worked alongside Anquetin in the Cloisonniste experiment since 1887, and no doubt took for his own the theory of it set out by Édouard Dujardin. Dujardin had spoken of the means, goals and affinities of the new movement: it was a 'decorative' form of painting, its 'areas of flat colour' 'compartmented', thus combining 'a clear outline' with 'violent colours', and showing overall a 'hieratic character in both line and colour'[5].
Freed from subordination to appearances – 'the representation of nature is a chimerical goal' – the artist sought instead to express 'the *sentiment* of things': 'not their image, but their *character*'. In short, this form of painting attempted to 'define the intimate reality – the essence – of the object in the minimum number of characteristic lines and colours'. Attaining 'truth to sensation' by a process of 'intellectual construction', Cloisonnisme thus became a 'symbolic con-

◀ *Fruit (312)*, detail.

cept of art', in which the object was 'symbolised' (that is, represented) by a sign. 'Primitive and popular art […] are symbolic in this fashion', Dujardin remarked, expressly citing 'the *image d'Épinal* and the Japanese [print-]album' among the ancestors of Cloisonnist notions and procedures. *Japonisme*, Cloisonnisme, schematisation, and the inspiration of the primitives – these notions, present in Dujardin's article, were surely part and parcel of what Bernard had to say, and they paved the way for Synthetism (see *Vision*, *308*, inset). We can, at all events, be sure that 'synthesis' came up for discussion, since Gauguin alludes to it in a letter to Schuffenecker of 14 August[6].

Other accounts suggest other aspects of Bernard's views. Shortly before Bernard arrived in Pont-Aven, a letter he received from Van Gogh[7] tells us that Bernard was interested in 'experimenting with the properties of lines moving in contrary directions'. Was this a personal experiment in stylisation, one that offered an outlet for his aggression? It seems, at very least, an indication that Bernard was attempting to harness the unmediated expressivity of lines, colours and forms. This was a subject widely discussed at the time, in which Gauguin, too, was interested (see *Fruit*, *312*, inset). Indeed, *Fruit* may constitute a response to the collective discussions of this subject.

The same letter shows that Bernard was, like many others, fascinated by 'primitive' painting. Van Gogh writes: 'You are currently studying the methods of the Italian and German primitives, the symbolic meaning that can reside in the abstract and mystical draughtsmanship of the Italians'. These notions map onto certain of Dujardin's ideas. But Van Gogh's letter may imply that, even before his arrival in Pont-Aven, Bernard had made a connection between schematic forms and aspirations more or less mystical. This connection was to be one of the main characteristics of Synthetism (see *Vision*, *308*, insets on 'European Primitivism' and 'Synthetism'). It should be noted that, as a Catholic, Bernard was to some extent bound up with the religious orientation then serving as a pointer to many intellectuals and artists (see *Vision*, inset on 'Positivism and the Ideal').

Bernard later spoke of this period of unconstrained collaboration: 'I lived alongside [Gauguin] throughout the summer of 1888, we spent all our time together. Our work was, at this time, made almost in common'[8]. It was the elder of the two who assimilated most from the relationship. Bernard seems to have 'borrowed' from Gauguin only the blazing colours of *Black Wheat* (see *Cow on the Porsac'h Cliffs*, *310*, inset). In late 1887, Gauguin had shown himself resistant to the areas of flat colour practised by the Cloisonnistes; now he was ready. He sensed that the system advanced by Bernard connected with a deep-lying tendency; that the primitive aspirations of this aesthetic offered formal outlets to his own instinctual primitivism, and that its schematic 'abstraction' answered a need for meaning that he himself – as we shall see – had recently begun to feel.



L. Anquetin: *Portrait of Bernard*, drawing, c. 1887. Private collection.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



É. Bernard: *Landscape in Brittany* (Luthi 132).
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

An epistolary presence ■ Above all, Bernard placed in Gauguin's hands the letters that he had received from Van Gogh (then in Arles) between March and August 1888. There were thirteen of them, all, from the start, filled with thoughts about a kind of formal simplification inspired by Japanese prints. The analogy with the ideas of Dujardin is not unexpected, given that Bernard and Anquetin's interest in *japonisme* had very largely been awoken by Van Gogh in the first place (see *Wrestlers*, *298*, inset on 'Van Gogh and the Transition…'). But, as summer approached, the letters turned more and more to the subject of the inwardness of colours and an almost religious ideal of art and life. We cannot here do justice to the very inspired ideas that thus came Gauguin's way; certain of them are described at the still life *Fête Gloanec (301)*, *Vision (308)* and the self-portrait *309*. The letters were full of enchanting colour-detailed descriptions and sketches of Van Gogh's pictures, and informed by Van Gogh's intense desire to communicate. Together with the eleven further letters that reached Bernard and Gauguin in Pont-Aven, they afforded a striking picture of Van Gogh's aspirations and achievements, inflaming Gauguin's imagination and fuelling his enthusiasm for new experiment. They had a profound impact on his thinking about colour. But, above all, they kindled in him a spiritual flame, elevating his awareness of his artistic mission, and indirectly encouraging him to infuse his works with messages, thoughts and meanings. This was anyway spontaneous in him; it had been obvious since *Two Women Bathing (241)*, and it was to be an integral part of his personal symbolism thereafter.

We count fourteen works that were, in our view, probably painted during the ten weeks between Bernard's arrival shortly before 15 August and Gauguin's departure on 21 October. They are classified not by genre (landscape, still life etc.) but in an order very largely chronological, which attempts to chart Gauguin's progress as he blazed his own trail out of Impressionism into a form of modern painting both Synthetist and Symbolist. This was a highly experimental trail, and, as we might expect from Gauguin, involved neither linear progress nor irrevocable decisions.

[1] 'Chronique régionale', *L'Union agricole et maritime*, 10 August 1888, p. 3.
[2] In P. Tuarze: *Pont-Aven, art et artistes*, Paris, 1973, p. 22.
[3] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 14 August 1888 (Merlhès 159).
[4] H. Dorra: 'Émile Bernard and Paul Gauguin', *GBA*, April 1955, pp. 234, 237, fig. 13.
[5] É. Dujardin: 'Calendrier. Aux XX et aux Indépendants: le Cloisonisme*', *La Revue indépendante*, March 1888, pp. 487-492.
[6] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 14 August 1888 (Merlhès 159), above, see also the still life *Fête Gloanec (301)*.
[7] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 4 August 1888 (B14).
[8] *L'Aventure de ma vie*, manuscript in the collection of the Bibliothèque du Louvre, p. 78.



300

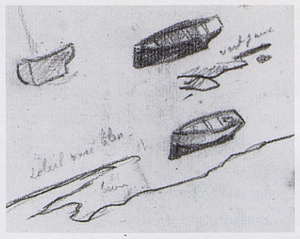
300
Fisherman and Bathers on the Aven

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.60
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 88
W264

This view down to the bathing place just opposite the port, whose quay is visible at the top of the picture, is from the side of Mount Saint-Guénolé, no doubt close to the site of *White River (285)*: the same pollarded willow seems to appear in both pictures. A little sketch (see opposite) of similar boats, with indications of their reflections in the water, shows that the motif of this painting was indeed inspired by impressions from nature; the sketchbook has since been broken up.

The painting is clearly later than *White River*, as is shown by the experiments in almost every department. No other work so clearly illustrates the transition between the two 'waves' of Japonisme (in abbreviated form, the 'spatial' and the 'flat': on this see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset on 'Van Gogh and the Transition…').

Surface / depth ■ The contrasted foreground, steep overhead view and absence of horizon are 'Japanese' effects by then widely practised. Putting to use the very steep sides of Mont Saint-Guénolé as it fell away toward the Aven, Gauguin had already painted two relatively extreme examples of these effects: *223* and *278*. Although the waters of the river rise up like a wall, space is not abolished; as in *Wrestlers*, the horizontal and vertical plans form an increasingly acute angle but have not yet merged. Here the effect is further dramatised by the addition of minuscule figures, a procedure we have already seen in *Winter (265)*; they punctuate the background like the little figures in certain Japanese prints – or as if they had been filtered through some optical system dreamed up by Caillebotte.
But a decisive step is here taken toward second-wave *japonisme*; never before had Gauguin placed such emphasis on the decorative surface of the painting, which is rhythmically divided into carefully outlined areas of colour, in particular by the triumphant arabesque of the slope, one of the very first examples of such sinuous lines leading the eye into the composition. And for the first time in a Gauguin landscape there is no rendering of atmosphere to impose itself on the view of the pigments on the canvas, which strike the eye directly.
All these effects Gauguin thought of as deriving from the art of Japanese prints. Their emergence can undoubtedly be attributed to the arrival of Bernard: to his paintings, which were in some respects more audacious than Gauguin's; to his ideas; and to the letters from Van Gogh that he lent to Gauguin. Vincent's letters teemed with *japoniste* observations on 'Japanese-style simplification of colours' and 'limpidity of atmosphere' (see introduction to this period and *Wrestlers, 298,* inset).



Boats, detail of a drawing.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Three transitional works ■ Thus, of all the new ideas put forward by Bernard – *japonisme*, Cloisonnisme, schematisation, and the return to a more primitive art – only the first was taken on board by Gauguin in this landscape.
The present work has much in common with the still life *Fête Gloanec (301)* and *Swineherd (302)*. The composition of each comes firmly down on the side of decoration, and no attempt is made to convey atmosphere. They share clear outlines, sinewy arabesques, tightly meshed brushstrokes, and colour laid down in little patches in a marbled surface, with no transition between tones. They were all painted in August, and form a little family of paintings marking a definitive transition to a new manner. But the simplification remains timid, and the surface refined.
The effect of the light on the water in this painting is still of directly Impressionist lineage, and there are no Synthetist elements at all; it must surely antedate *Swineherd (302)*, and perhaps even the still life, though the retrospective testimony of Denis offers *Fête Gloanec* the status of first work in the new manner. It must at all events date from around 15 August.

Ornamental plants ■ The plumed fern and stiff tufts of grass in the foreground are the product of some very personal instinct in Gauguin: their ornamental character foreshadows the plant life in the near-contemporary portrait of *Captain Jacob (306)* and in many later works such as the self-portrait (W323) and *Exotic Eve* (W389).
Increasingly ominous, such plants gradually acquired a meaning and codification of their own, not unlike Gauguin's birds (see *To Make a Bouquet, 62*, inset on birds, and *Breton Women Chatting, 237*, inset on geese).
The one in the left foreground here possesses something very like an eye, and seems almost alive; one wonders whether it does not also foreshadow the anthropomorphic plants of the Arles period (see the portrait of *Van Gogh, 326*, and *Public Garden, 329*). If so, it would introduce a slightly fantastical note, an equivalent, perhaps, to the strangely transformed ears bestowed on the *Little Breton Bathers (295)* of the same period. Whether or not this was a deliberate attempt at strangeness – several months later Gauguin openly announced his liking for such oddities in a letter to Bernard[1] – it is clear that Gauguin was no longer content simply to transcribe the life of nature.

[1] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, late October-early November 1888 (Merlhès 176), see also *Near Arles (323)*.

Documents and bibliography:
Y. Thirion: 'L'influence de l'estampe japonaise dans l'œuvre de Gauguin', *GBA*, special Gauguin number, January-April 1956, published 1958, pp. 104 (repr.), 106.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 264 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Maîtres français, XIXe-XXe siècles, Paris, Robert Schmit, 1987, no. 25.

Provenance:
Sale, Paris, 8 June 1909, no. 20 (*Boat*, 0.73 × 0.61, signed lower right).
The existence of a Druet-Vizzavona photo, no. 20304, seems to indicate the presence of this work in France at some point before 1918.
Mme Courdille-Gernetz, Switzerland.
Sale, Paris, Nouveau-Drouot, 8 December 1986, no. 57 (to Mme Gemey).
Private collection, Japan.

301
Still Life, Fête Gloanec

Oil on wood. 0.38 × 0.53
Dated and annotated lower right:
88 / Fête Gloanec / Madeleine B --
W290

This is the second of Gauguin's still lifes to carry an inscription stating that it was painted at the pension Gloanec; the first was *217* (for information about the *pension*, see that entry).

The circumstances surrounding the unexpected signature of this work were recorded by Maurice Denis, who had them from Sérusier, and, when she sold the painting to him, from Marie-Jeanne Gloanec[1]. He later recounted them thus: 'In the same inn there was also the reactionaries' corner, amongst whom was one G. de Maupassant, who passed for the father of Guy [as indeed he was, see inset below]. He waged relentless war on the innovators. Custom required that, for the landlady's feast day, every painter should hang a painting in the dining room. De Maupassant got Mme Gloanec all worked up against Gauguin's painting: "No," he said, "You can't hang that, he's making fun of you". So Gauguin came up with a trick: he attributed the still life that he had just painted to the inexperienced hand of Bernard's sister (who had come to join her brother), signing it "Madeleine B…"[2]. Sérusier, who, it should be said, arrived at the inn somewhat after these events, confirms that Laval, Moret, Bernard, Chamaillard and Gauguin, the 'revolutionaries', took their meals 'by themselves in a little side-room' and that the 'orthodox painters took care not to be seen with these pariahs. Gustave de Maupassant sat at the big table; he was sixty-six at the time, and signed his paintings G. de Maupassant. This fellow was the most virulent of those who objected when the landlady suggested putting some Gauguins up on the wall […] He was threatening to leave the hotel […]. Madeleine Bernard […] offered to assume authorship of Gauguin's painting so that it could be exhibited[3]'. Denis adds: 'When I bought it, long afterwards, Mme Gloanec assured me that she hadn't been taken in at all[4]'.
The landlady's feast day cannot have been her birthday, since Marie-Jeanne Gloanec was born in February; it must have been the Assumption, feast day of all those who share the name Marie. We can consequently date the still life with some certainty to the days immediately preceding 15 August 1888. Denis described it as the 'first of the new manner'[5], though his testimony is not first-hand, since he did not visit Pont-Aven in 1888.
The day before, Gauguin had confided to Schuffenecker some very new thoughts: 'A piece of advice, don't copy too much from nature – art is an abstraction: draw it forth from nature by dreaming before her […]. My most recent works are making good progress and I think you will find a particular note or rather an affirmation of my previous experiments, the synthesis of a form and a colour with only the dominant considered[6]'. The same letter announces the recent arrival of Bernard. Clearly this was a decisive factor in impelling Gauguin to take this new and essential step.
The novelties that Gauguin highlights are 'synthesis' and 'abstraction'. The 'synthesis' is, of course, the large area of flat colour afforded by the table, a 'Japanese' effect which Anquetin and Bernard had already used in Cloisonniste works. Gauguin had seen these works, but had not, at the time, been willing to venture in that direction (see *Wrestlers*, *298*, inset 'Van Gogh and the Transition…'). Yet Gauguin perceived his 'synthesis' as an 'affirmation of [his] previous experiments'; in his view, this effect was continuous with the unified surfaces in the *Wrestlers* or *Haymaking (287)* of the previous month. And it is this level area of table-top, with its arbitrary colour and suppression of perspective, that leads on to the hitherto unexplored territory of 'abstraction'.

An astounding colour ■ This is a very decorative picture; painted on a wooden panel whose upper surface is densely covered with paint, it seems to draw its inspiration from Japanese lacquer ware.
The anti-naturalism of its pure vermilion is, at all events, completely new in Gauguin's work – though it was increasingly the order of the day (see inset on colour). It is the first of the astonishing red backgrounds that

[1] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 27 April 1888 (Merlhès 145).
[2] Johnston: 'Gustave de Maupassant, l'artiste', *Bulletin des amis de Flaubert et de Maupassant*, 1999, no. 7, pp. 7-25.
[3] G. Normandy: *La Fin de Maupassant*, Paris, 1927, pp. 46-47.
[4] Johnston, 1999, pp. 7-25.
[5] A. Fergent, *Journal des artistes*, 30 September 1888 (in Johnston, 1999).
[6] Vollard, 1937 (**D**).
[7] Johnston, 1999, pp. 7-25.

Gustave de Maupassant

When his path crossed Gauguin's, Gustave de Maupassant was a man of some reputation, though not so famous as his son. When Gauguin learnt that Gustave would soon be arriving in Pont-Aven, he wrote to ask Schuffenecker 'write and tell me what his painting is like: this year he exhibited with the Indépendants[1]'.. Marlo Johnston[2], who has researched Gustave de Maupassant in some depth, believes that he has not been given his due.
He was born in 1821 to a Rouen family of tradesmen and financiers. In the portrait of him painted by Bellangé in 1840 (reproduced in the Chronology: 1888), he already appears as an artist, seemingly holding a paintbrush and the watercolours that were later to become one of his favourite media. He was married in 1846, and had several children; Guy was born in 1850. He finally separated from his wife in 1862, and we next find him in Paris, having suffered financial collapse and working as a stockbroker's cashier; Johnston tell us that this was at Evrard of rue Drouot. Normandy states that Gustave 'had an interest in a stockbroker's' (he names the Parisian company Stolz), which provided him with a small independent income[3].
Gustave continued in this employment – which he hated – till he died; he could not afford to leave. But his painting career seems to have taken on new life after the financial crash of 1882-1883: 'I went back to painting with a vengeance three years ago now, and I should like very much to make some money out of it', he wrote in 1886. 'The crash left me thirty thousand francs out of pocket, and I'd be hard pressed to earn it back in these hard times, while office-work simply exhausts me[4]'. When he exhibited with the Indépendants in 1885-1888, Gustave's work was generally admired. Perhaps he gained an aura from the reflected fame of his son. But to judge by the few accounts known to us, he seems to have been a forceful painter. One of these accounts mentions the works painted during his stay in Pont-Aven: 'His Brittany views are now as vigorous as a memory of Constable, now inhabited by a harsh grey light; all of them are sturdily constructed and thoroughly consistent in all their parts[5]'. His works, obviously much more traditional than Gauguin's, sold for around the same price, in the region of FF 400.
Vollard attributes Gustave's role in the anecdote about the feast-day to a Paris municipal councillor who was a member of the Beaux-Arts commission, without naming him[6]. But Gustave seems to have been a member of neither institution and Vollard may possibly be confusing him with Jobbé-Duval (on whom, see *Vaugirard Church, 69*, inset). Gustave was rather a handsome man who seems to have enjoyed the impression he made on the fair sex. He was not close to his son Guy, and Guy was not always, it seems, very appreciative of Gustave's painting. Nor was he invariably respectful, sometimes reprimanding his father as though their roles had been reversed[7]. Though an impulsive character, Gustave seems to behaved decently towards his children and grandchildren, and earned his own living right to the end of his life. Johnston considers his reputation for weakness and irascibility rather overdone.



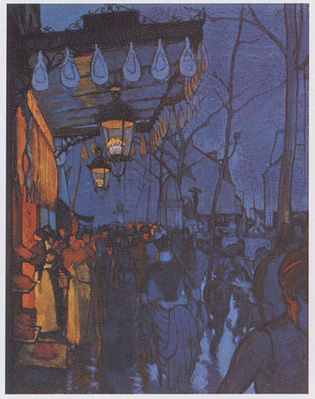
One of the last photographs of Gustave de Maupassant. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



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Pure, Simple, Arbitrary Colour

Uninhibited ■ In Edmond de Goncourt's view, fashions in colour had changed, and one of most important incitements toward greater brilliance had been the discovery of Japanese art: 'Now that my eyes are accustomed to living in the colours of the Far East, my eighteenth-century is losing its colours. I see it in grisaille[1]'; 'Who, twenty years ago, would have dared paint a woman in a truly yellow dress? It became possible only after Regnault's Japanese "Salomé"[2]. And this peremptory introduction into the European purview of the Far East's imperial colour is, yes, a veritable revolution[3].
In the early 1880s, the attractions of vivid colour were increasingly clear. Sédille, in a lecture given at the Trocadéro, plaintively observed that '[W]e no longer have faith in

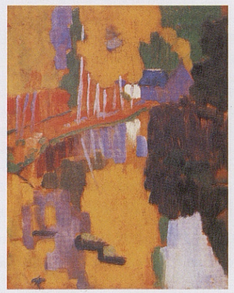


L. Anquetin: *Avenue de Clichy, Evening*, 1887. Hartford (Connecticut), Wadsworth Atheneum.

colour. / Only the coarse and the naïve are still fascinated by simple shades, so that uninhibited reds, blues, greens and yellows seem nowadays confined to signs and shop-fronts'[4]. As early as 1886, Gauguin had grasped the need for some kind of transposition: 'Will you ever have as much light as there is nature, as much warmth as the sun? / You speak of exaggeration, but how can you exaggerate when you fall so far short of nature[5]'.
Towards the mid-1880s, familiarity with the laws of Chevreul, which explained how colour-intensity could be enhanced, inevitably exacerbated this appetite for pure, luminous colour. The discovery of the art of stained glass and popular imagery (see *Vision, 308*, inset on the origins of Cloisonnisme, and *Still Life with Fan, 259*, inset) led in the same direction.

Flat ■ The graduated tones and colour modulations of the Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists were finally abandoned by the Cloisonnistes in favour of flat areas of simplified colour in the pictures they exhibited at the Grand-Bouillon in late 1887. In Anquetin's work, the simplification and exaggeration of colour were particularly notable; his pictures with their 'dominant tones', said Geffroy, were 'enough to illuminate the wall and do violence to the eye. The reaper, the fisherman [*Boat*], the evening effect [*Avenue du Clichy*] are of dazzling and highly decorative gold-yellow, red, green and blue [...] it's a form of originality of Japanese inspiration, perhaps from Barbedienne's[6]'. One of the critics reviewing the exhibition of les XX was repelled by the 'pseudo-Japanese' aspect of this 'incendiary' form of polychrome[7], but Dujardin, in his article on Cloisonnisme, propounded a theory of such 'violent colours' (see introductory text to this period).
Bernard must have passed these ideas on to Gauguin, though his own works – more daring than Anquetin's in their simplified draughtsmanship – perhaps retained more broken colour than his colleague's. Later Bernard claimed to have converted Gauguin to these simplifications: 'The more you divide the tone, I told him, the less intense it becomes[8]'. At all events, the Pont-Aven circle worked out a theory of simplified and exaggerated colour over the summer of 1888 and Gauguin shortly afterwards imparted it to the young Sérusier, who accordingly painted his celebrated *Talisman*.
But *Still Life (260)*, which includes a print that Gauguin had presumably bought the previous winter, proves that he was already training his eye to accept areas of flat colour (see *260*, inset). And – since he was reading his letters – he was also acquainted with Van Gogh's ideas on this subject (see the introductions to the two phases of his stay in Pont-Aven). Surfaces of simplified colour (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset on Japonisme) and complementaries as a means of brightening and enhancing colour (see inset on complementaries) were subjects to which Van Gogh constantly returned. 'Nothing but pure colours', was his doctrine and profession of faith[9].

Non-mimetic ■ Seeking every greater intensity of colour, Van Gogh soon after spoke of enhancing their expressiveness by



P. Sérusier: *The Talisman*, 1888 (Guicheteau 2). Paris, Musée d'Orsay.



V. Van Gogh: *Shopfront, Arles* (F389). Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).

transposition. Writing to Bernard about a *Sower* with violet earth and yellow sky (F422, reproduced opposite the inset on complementaries), Van Gogh stated: 'I rather gave up on truth in colour'[10], and in a letter to Theo shortly preceding a letter to Gauguin that has since disappeared, he declared 'I'm now going to be an arbitrary colorist[11]'. Arbitrary is the important word: it implies that the subjective vision takes precedence over reality. Gauguin, too, was unhesitatingly 'arbitrary' in his red backgrounds of that summer (see inset on 'Red').
With this purification and exaggeration of colour a liberation was accomplished that benefited not merely the Nabis and Fauves but the whole of modern art. But, for the architects of this liberation, in the summer of 1888, arbitrary was not a synonym for gratuitous: exaggeration and transposition responded to inner promptings. As early as June, Van Gogh was speaking of colour as a 'symbolic language'[12] using 'symbolic' where today we might say 'expressive'. Gauguin was quick to adopt these ideas (see the self-portrait *Les Misérables, 309*, inset on colour).

[1] E. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 11 January 1876.
[2] Henri Alexandre Georges Regnault was a pupil of Lamothe and Cabanel; he was, according to Bénézit, an excellent colourist, and, though he died young (at twenty-seven), was one of the 'masters' of the official art of the time. At the 1870 Salon, his picture *Salome as Dancer, Carrying the Basin and Knife for the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist* (treated as a genre scene) created a sensation.
[3] E. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 18 February 1877.
[4] In E. Soldi: *Les Arts méconnus. Les nouveaux Musées du Trocadéro*, Paris, 1881, p. 503.
[5] Paul Gauguin: 'Notes synthétiques', in his 1884-1886 sketchbook (Cogniat-Rewald, 1962), p. 9.
[6] G. Geffroy: 'Chronique. Pointillé. Cloisonisme*', *La Justice*, 11 April 1888, p. 1. The reference to Barbedienne is obscure, and the authors would welcome illumination on this point.
[7] L.: 'Correspondance de Belgique', *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité*, 3 March 1888, p. 68.
[8] É. Bernard: *L'Aventure de ma vie*, manuscript in the collection of the Bibliothèque du Louvre, p. 76.
[9] Vincent Van Gogh to his sister, 16 June 1888 (W4); or to Émile Bernard, 6 June 1888 (B6).
[10] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 18 June 1888 (B7).
[11] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 11 August 1888 (520).
[12] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 26 June 1888 (503).

Red

Gauguin had hitherto shown his appreciation of vermilion in 'flashes', for example in the scarf of *The Boss's Daughter (207)*, or the skirt of *Breton Woman with Pitcher (267)*. This still life marks the anti-Naturalist liberation of red. Had the red background of the Japanese print in *Still Life (260)* spurred him along this road? At all events, large flat areas of red start to appear in Gauguin and his colleagues' work during the summer of 1888. We find them in Gauguin's *Vision (308), Wave (303), Cow on the Porsac'h Cliffs (310)*, and *Breton Woman and Goose (307)*, and in *Breton Couple in the River* (reproduced at *307*), Laval's *On the Way to Market* and Bernard's *Black Wheat* (Luthi 123, on which see *310*, inset).
In the autumn, Gauguin and Van Gogh were still discussing the subject. Gauguin later wrote: 'When we were at Arles, both of us mad about colour, contending fiercely for



C. Laval: *On the Way to Market*. Private collection.

beautiful colours, I adored red: where do you find a perfect vermilion[1]?' Both men painted views of the Alyscamps in which the soil is a glowing red (Van Gogh's F486 and F487, and Gauguin's *316*), and their famous night-café paintings both feature red walls.
These areas of bright red became a common currency, and Gauguin at least always found room for them. The painter André Lhote, twenty years later, considered them irreplaceable, speaking of 'those beautiful reds so beloved by the master, in which he contrived infinite diversity[2]'. It is probably no accident that Gauguin should have lighted on red as the first colour to be used 'arbitrarily'; he surely found it an easy colour to internalise.

[1] Paul Gauguin: 'Natures mortes', in *Essais d'art libre*, January 1894, p. 273.
[2] André Lhote to G. Frizeau, 11 November 1908, in J.F. Moueix: *Un amateur d'art éclairé à Bordeaux. Gabriel Frizeau* (doctoral thesis, Université de Bordeaux), 1969, p. 269.

Complementaries

One of Chevreul's laws provides that the juxtaposition of two complementaries increases the intensity of both, and Van Gogh was a fervent practitioner of such collocations, hoping through them to attain the simplification, purity and brilliance of which he dreamed. His was an endless labour, an unyielding 'mental effort to balance the six essential colours[1]'. He frequently attempted to introduce several pairs in the same picture[2], and added to the three basic contrasts (yellow-violet, blue-orange and green-red) a 'fourth pair of complementaries'[3]: black and white, whose purpose was to calm the overall effect. In the *Sower* (F422), he explained, 'the white trousers rest the eye, distracting it at a point when that excessive double contrast of yellow and violet might start to rankle[4]'.
Gauguin himself was more inclined to subtle modulation. But when he attempted the kind of simplified colours his younger colleagues were raving about, he decided – prompted, we can be sure, by Van Gogh's letters – to undertake a series of experiments with complementaries. The *Vision (308), Wave (303)* and *Cow on the Porsac'h Cliffs (310)* thus balance their reds with blue-green or with dark or white areas. Laval followed in Gauguin's footsteps with his *On the Way to Market*. The self-portrait *Les Misérables (309)*, which contrasts Prussian blue with orange-yellow, and the still life *Fête Gloanec*, a painting of multiple contrasts, are a conscious application of these principles.
Both Gauguin and Van Gogh soon came to prefer a very different and more 'singing' harmony, Gauguin perhaps going further than Van Gogh in this direction: see *Blue Trees, 319*, inset. And finally, in 1894, Gauguin had come to reject the use of complementaries so absolutely that when his disciple Armand Seguin took the liberty of introducing a 'smidgin of orange' next to the blues of a still life, Gauguin dissuaded him with what Seguin tells us was a loaded gun[5].



'I rather gave up on truth in colour'. V. Van Gogh: *Sower, Sunset* (F422). Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum Collection.

[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 29 June 1888 (507).
[2] See, for example, Vincent Van Gogh's letter to Émile Bernard, 20 May 1888 (B5).
[3] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 17-18 October 1888 (B22).
[4] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 16 June 1888 (B7).
[5] A. Seguin: 'Paul Gauguin', *L'Occident*, April 1903, p. 235.

Gauguin used in the pictures of that summer (see inset on 'Red'), though its surface is much less prominently outlined than the areas of flat colour in Bernard and Anquetin.
The vermilion forms part of a system of complementaries, as it was so often to do during this summer. This particular system had already been explored in *Still Life with Fan (259)* of late 1887. Here the green offers only a feeble counterpoise to the impassioned red but the harmony is made more vibrant by the addition of a blue and orange pairing. Van Gogh's ideas, frequently set out in his letters, must be the source for this colour methodology, which Gauguin did not usually apply in any such systematic way (see inset on complementaries).

A radically new space ■ But the most astonishing thing about this table is the complete flattening of its top, creating an unprecedented pictorial layout. What Gauguin later called 'inflexible perspective[7]' has been abolished; the academic requirement, stated by Denis in his theory of the Synthetist revolution as 'art: that which is in the round'[8], is rejected. The verticalisa-

tion here is not the same as that of *Wrestlers*: space as we perceive it has been abolished.
This was a radical innovation, though some of the milestones leading to it had already been laid down by the contemporary avant-garde, notably by Cézanne. It is possible that, before leaving Paris, Gauguin had seen certain Cézanne still lifes generally dated to the mid-1880s that exhibit a very similar frontality: *Fruit* (Venturi 504), for example. Did he know Bernard's *Stoneware Pot with Apples* (Luthi 89) with its very similar effect? It was, as Welsh-Ovcharov notes, 'visibly overpainted later'[9], but may still at this time have displayed a completely vertical table-top represented as a flat vertical area of colour. In fact, there was already a sort of general movement in this direction – see the inset on 'Schematisation and "Abstract" Space'.



P. Cézanne: *Still Life*, 1885-1887 (Venturi 504). Photo: Sotheby's.



É. Bernard: *Earthenware Pot and Apples*, 1887 (Luthi 89). Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

'Art: an abstraction' ■ Even before Bernard's arrival, Gauguin had written to Van Gogh: 'I completely agree with you about how little exactitude contributes to art – / Art is an abstraction[10]'. He repeated these sentiments in his letter to Schuffenecker of 14 August: 'A piece of advice, don't copy too much from nature – art is an abstraction: draw it forth from nature by dreaming before her[11]'. Taken to its logical extreme, the collective idea of which Gauguin is here the spokesman provides that the external appearance of things is less important than their image in the mind, their reflection in the 'mysterious centre of thought[12]'. The aim was therefore to restore their essence or character by means of schematisation, of signs or physical equivalents, and the result was the 'abstract' though still figurative representation of Synthetism (see *Vision*, *308*, inset on Synthetism). With its abstract space and unreal colours, the curious *Fête Gloanec* was one of the first of Gauguin's paintings to tackle this programme, of which the *Vision* is a more complete embodiment.
It was not without influence: tables of this kind, cut off by the frame and tilted into a new perspective, became something of a cliché among Gauguin's entourage during the early 1890s.
The still life itself is treated in less radical – less *synthétique* – fashion than that on which it stands; neither relief nor perspective are abolished, and in subject and arrangement it is somewhat reminiscent of Monet's *Galettes* (D. Wildenstein 746), which Gauguin must have seen at the Impressionist exhibition of 1883.
But already the pure colour sits radiant on the surface of the canvas, perfectly averse to any rendering of atmosphere, while the precise little brushstrokes, areas of flat, marbled colour and slender arabesques (which are not remotely primitive) make this one of the three transitional works announcing Gauguin's new manner, all of which pertain to a very decorative 'second-wave' Japonisme (see the view of the Aven, *300*).
Finally, the astonishing, undulating orange mass on the left no doubt 'synthesises' the volume of a bouquet: marigolds grouped around a scabious? Its central flower slightly foreshadows the open-eyed sunflower in the portrait of *Van Gogh (326)*, and is perhaps a distant relative of the bizarre plant-life composites which now began to appear in Gauguin's work (see the view of the Aven, *300*).
The reference to Madeleine Bernard shows how quickly she had become part of the life of this little artistic group. Though she had been in Pont-Aven for only a few days, she had by no means escaped Gauguin's notice (see her portrait, *305*). And perhaps this signature was also a more or less conscious tribute paid by Gauguin to Madeleine's brother, Émile; an acknowledgement of their work in common over the summer of 1888.

[9] In the catalogue of the exhibition '*Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism*', Toronto (Ontario) and Amsterdam, 1981, p. 29.
[10] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 24 or 25 July 1888 (Merlhès 158).
[11] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 14 August 1888 (Merlhès 159).
[12] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 263.

'Abstract' and Schematic Space

The Renaissance representation of a world of three dimensions was no doubt one way of demonstrating the power of the human mind over space at a time when the human mind



P. Cézanne: *The Curving Road* (Venturi 329). Boston (Massachusetts), Museum of Fine Arts.

was thought to participate in the divine. By contrast, toward the end of the nineteenth century, there were those who perceived in the alliance of rationalism and materialism no more than an 'imbecilic society of bankers and polytechnicians'[1] headed for a dead end; its foundations were, they felt, in need of revision (see *Vision*, *308*, inset on Positivism and Idealism).
This disenchantment with civilisation ran parallel to the increasing diffusion of information about primitive Western and non-Western art (see *Vision*, insets 'European primitives' and 'Other Civilisations'). The nineteenth century was coming to perceive the value of other systems of figuration. Thus, in 1872, Ziem spoke of the Japanese system of representation in space, emphasising the 'kinship [...] with Giotto and the primitives'; there was, he said, a 'perspective common to these two art forms', one which 'places the centre of the composition squarely before us and allows a whole world to take its place there[2]'. Cézanne had been among the first to deny traditional perspective and space, using effects such as the astonishing skirt striped with perfectly parallel verticals in his portrait of Mme Cézanne (Venturi 292, 1877) or the flattening into the vertical of the distance in *Bend in the Road* (Venturi 329, early 1880s). Undoubtedly, Cézannes of this kind had long been known to Gauguin.
And now, in 1888, the pioneering spirits were ready to leave classical space behind them. Gauguin, working alone, had not yet ventured to do this in *Wrestlers (298)*, but the arrival of Bernard bearing Cloisonniste ideas about schematic representation (see Introduction to this period) proved decisive.
While Gauguin was painting *Fête Gloanec*, Van Gogh was proving no less radical: his *Zouave* (F424) – painted between late June and early August 1888 – rests his feet on a steeply tilted tiled floor. In the attempt to escape a form of figuration whose roots lay in the rationalist realism that had dominated the last four centuries, all eyes turned toward the inner world, and the very different logic by which it was governed; the new goal was something known (at the time) as 'abstraction'.

[1] G.-A. Aurier: 'Le symbolisme en peinture', *Mercure de France*, March 1891, p. 165.
[2] E. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 1 March 1872.



V. Van Gogh: *Seated Zouave* (F424). Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

[1] Denis, 1957, entries for August 1905 (**D**).
[2] Denis, 1934 (**D**).
[3] Chassé, 1955 (**D**).
[4] M. Denis, preface to Sérusier (**D**).
[5] M. Denis, preface to Sérusier (**D**).
[6] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 14 August 1888 (Merlhès 159).
[7] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 222.
[8] P. Louis [M. Denis]: 'Notes d'art. Définition du néo-traditionnisme', *Art et Critique*, 23 August 1890, p. 542.

Documents and bibliography:

Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 224: 'Gloanec 3 panels given' (the two others are: *White Tablecloth, 217* of 1886, and *Cottages, 266*).
M. Denis: *Journal*, Paris, 1957, vol. II, pp. 21-23 [entries for August 1905]: gives the anecdote about Gauguin signing 'Madeleine Bernard' (see above), which Denis had from Sérusier, who was then visiting Le Pouldu with him, adding (p. 22): 'I own this still life, Fête Gloanec, so brightly coloured, it warms my heart like a fragment of Venetian [art]'.
Note by Armand Gloanec (who had by then taken over the management of the hotel from his mother) on the hotel's headed notepaper (Centre de documentation of the Musée de Pont-Aven): 'I have sold to Monsieur Maurice Denis a Gauguin signed Madeleine Bernard and another Gauguin still life situated in the café[, and] two other pictures by Bernard for the sum of twelve hundred francs. / Pont-Aven, 13 September 1905.
M. Denis: 'L'époque du symbolisme', *GBA*, March 1934, p. 169 (see above).
A. Vollard: *Souvenirs d'un marchand de tableaux*, Paris, 1937, reprinted 1957, pp. 150-151.
É. Bernard: *Souvenirs inédits sur Paul Gauguin...*, fascicule collecting a series of articles that appeared in 1939, Lorient, no date, p. 17: 'Maurice Denis owns a magnificent still life by Gauguin that he signed (out of admiration for my sister): Madeleine Bernard'.
M. Denis: preface to P. Sérusier: *L'ABC de la peinture*, Paris, 1942, p. 59.
Chassé: *Gauguin et son temps*, Paris, 1955, pp. 50-51.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 290 (repr.).

Exhibitions:

Paris, galerie Dru, 1923, no. 10.
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 31 or 35, depending on the edition.
Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 21.
Gauguin et ses amis, Paris, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1934, no. 48.
L'École de Pont-Aven et les Nabis, Paris, galerie Parvillée, 1943, no. 15.
Gauguin et ses amis, Paris, galerie Kléber, 1949, no. 47.
Paris, Orangerie, 1949, no. 8.
Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-1950, no. 20.
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 27.
Bonnard, Vuillard et les Nabis, Paris, Musée d'Art moderne, 1955, no. 54.
Hommage à Sérusier et aux peintres du groupe de Pont-Aven, Quimper, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1958, no. 46.
Post-Impressionism, London, Royal Academy of Arts, 1979-1980, no. 85.
Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Toronto (Ontario), and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, 1981, no. 51.
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départmental du Prieuré, 1985, no. 80.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 52 (exhibited only in Paris).
Gauguin, les XX et La Libre Esthétique, Liège, Salle Saint-Georges, 1994-1995, no. 15.
Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 40.

Provenance:

Given by Gauguin to Marie-Jeanne Gloanec, 15 August 1888: see commentary, and Gauguin's sketchbook, **D** above.
Bought from M.-J. Gloanec by Maurice Denis in August 1905: see Denis' *Journal* and A. Gloanec's September receipt, **D** above.
Mme Robert Boulet-Denis, 1943.
Bought from Mme Boulet-Denis in 1964 by:
Orléans, Musée des Beaux-Arts – MO.64.1405.



302

302
SWINEHERD

Canvas. 0.735 × 0.920
Signed and dated lower right:
P. Gauguin 88
W255

This field lies just above Bel-Air track, on the hillside that dominates the south-west of Pont-Aven. At the time it was part of the estate of Lézaven manor (on which, see *Spring, 279*, inset). It now forms part of the gardens of a large property, and the 'field' has filled up with trees. Pont-Aven is invisible in the valley, almost entirely obscured by the shoulder of the hill. In the background, to the left, is the Bois d'Amour, then Mount Sainte-Marguerite, at the foot of which, on the far right, we see the bend in the Riec-en-Belon road. The figure of the young Breton in this landscape is very like



View from the little lane passing directly below the field.



Gauguin's sketchbook, p. 108, detail.
Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art.

that in *Winter (265)* of February 1888; no preliminary drawing is known. Here Gauguin has added a head and a hand inspired by similar but not identical sketches made in an 1886 sketchbook that he brought back to Pont-Aven in 1888[1]. The head and neck of the left-hand cow possibly come from page 108 of the same sketchbook, while the pig in profile is quite similar to sketches on page 33 (there are some differences) and page 49 (reversed).

Its subject and compositional method – inserting a figure or figures previously drawn into a landscape – make this painting a linear descendant of the rural scenes that Gauguin had painted in preceding years. But the general treatment, the small strokes meshing pure colours and the marbled surfaces outlined by slender arabesques, makes it one of three paintings marking a transition toward second-wave decorative *japonisme* (see the view of the Aven, *300*).

It must, however, be later than the other two. It is not just that non-atmospheric vision is perfected here (the view of the Aven remained in certain respects a study of light); it also introduces one or two new elements to the refined decorative surface, elements that pave the way for Synthetist and primitivist stylisation. One of these is the frontal vision, which no doubt derives from that of the table in the *Fête Gloanec* still life; here it is emphasised by the verticality of the small brushstrokes. The other is the naïve rendition of the little houses, which foreshadows the 'child's painting' to which Gauguin and Bernard aspired in late August 1888 (see *Little Dogs, 311*).

As *Fête Gloanec* is dated to very shortly before 15 August, it should be possible to place this painting in the second half of August. With it, Gauguin was taking his leave of the traditional system of representation.

[1] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1884-1886 (Cogniat-Rewald, 1962), pp. 19 and 20.

Documents and bibliography:

Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49) – among the no. 30 canvases: 'Landscape, red bush with pigs [valued FF] 400'.

J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.

List of the Fayet collection drafted in 1910 at the château d'Igny: 'Peasant and his pigs [valued FF] 15,000'.

'Gauguin en Bretagne', *GBA*, special Gauguin number, January-April 1956 (published 1958), p. 94 (repr., with a recent photograph of Pont-Aven taken from more or less the same spot).

Wildenstein, 1964, no. 255 (repr.).

R. Bacou: 'Paul Gauguin et Gustave Fayet', *Actes du colloque Gauguin* […] *1989*, Paris, 1991, p. 28.

Exhibitions:

Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.

Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1906, no. 24.

New York, Wildenstein, 1936, no. 6.

Cambridge (Massachusetts), Fogg Art Museum, 1936, no. 7.

Baltimore (Maryland), The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1936, no. 5.

San Francisco (California), San Francisco Museum of Art, 1936, no. 4.

Cézanne, Gauguin, Toledo (Ohio), The Toledo Museum of Art, 1936, no. 15.

New York, Wildenstein, 1946, no. 3.

Houston (Texas), The Museum of Fine Arts, 1954, no. 8.

Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago, and New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1959, no. 10.

Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 43 (exhibited only in Paris).

Provenance:

On deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890; see Boussod list, **D** above.

Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 22 in the catalogue, no. 23 in the auctioneer's book (*Breton Boy with his Pigs*, 310 f to Monsieur Jeanson, 243 rue Saint-Martin. Jeanson also purchased W336 at this sale; both it and the present picture soon found their way into the Fayet collection).

Gustave Fayet, Igny, c. 1906. Bacou tells us that this was one of the eighteen pictures that still belonged to Fayet when he died in 1925.

Mme d'Andoque de Sériège, Béziers.

Mrs Vincent Astor (later Mrs James Fosburgh), New York, 1948.

Norton Simon, Los Angeles (California), 1955.

Lucille Ellis Simon, c. 1985.

Given by the Lucille Ellis Simon family conditional on usufruct in 1991, and unconditionally in 1993 to:

Los Angeles (California), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Lucille Ellis Simon and Family in Honour of the Museum's Twenty-Fifth Anniversary – M. 91.256.

303
Wave

Canvas. 0.60 × 0.73
Signed and dated lower left:
88. P Gauguin
W286

Andersen first identified and photographed the motif of this painting[1]: Portguerrec creek at Le Pouldu, seen from the overhanging cliff to the west of the creek. The third rock, top left, is fictitious, and was invented for the purpose of continuing the diagonal (see the photo of the motif).



The site in recent times.

Gauguin's first visits to Le Pouldu are uncharted territory (see *Beach, 234*), but it seems plausible that in 1888 he made several brief stays there, perhaps, as local tradition has it, courtesy of Captain Jacob (see his portrait, *306*). In this painting and *Cow on the Porsac'h Cliffs (310)*, Gauguin, having picked out spectacular motifs that a mere tourist might have lighted on, bestowed on them a treatment testifying to his quest for a new style; we may perhaps infer that he had limited time sketching on the spot, and subsequently reworked his material in the studio.
But, for all it was found in nature, the subject of this work might almost have been borrowed from Japanese prints, in which waves and rocks form the subject of an entire tradition. Though the overhead view was inevitable from the edge of the cliff, it was undoubtedly prints that inspired the layout of the painting, with its strong diagonal and lack of horizon. (Many others had made use of such layouts. Monet had been



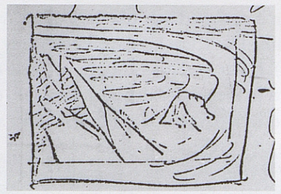
17th century Japanese album: *Rocks in the Undertow*, page of sketches. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

using them since the early 1880s.) We might say the same of the movement of the figures and their microscopic stature, something we have already encountered in pictures like *Winter (265)* and the view of the Aven (*300*), and of the graphic rendition of waves and whirlpools (a method to which Gauguin later returned). Many authors have consequently compared this work to prints such as Hokusai's *Wave*, and Hiroshige's *Naruto Whirlpool*. Certainly the 'second-wave' *japonisme* (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset on 'Van Gogh and the Transition…') then coming into being is very evident in the graphic and decorative aspects of this painting.
This landscape is non-atmospheric, and must be later than the vue of the Aven (*300*) and *Swineherd (302)* with their technique of small, brightly coloured strokes. The anti-naturalistic red of the beach derives from an effect first encountered in the still life *Fête Gloanec* (see *301*, inset on 'Red'). Here, the simplification of the areas of colour is more pronounced, but the draughtsmanship is not notably stylised. Perhaps, then, the work was painted around late August or early September.

[1] Andersen, 1970 (**D**).

Documents and bibliography:

Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49) – among the no. 20 canvases: 'Seascape with beach and little woman bathing [valued FF] 300' (there are two bathers in the picture, but the descriptions in this list are not invariably accurate).
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Probably: Vollard Archives: sales register 1894-1897, October 1897 entry (after 6 October): 'Credit Monsieur Chavasse 1 Gauguin'.
Vollard Archives, 1899 inventory: '[no.] 3376 – Provenance: Chavasse – Gauguin: oil seascape foam breaking on black rocks, red sand two sketches of figures. Canvas 65. 81'.
(?) Archives Vollard, 1907 diary, entry for Tuesday 6 August: 'Sent to the Prague exhibition by Michel and Kimbell (Camille Mauclair) the following 23 paintings at the prices indicated below […] 5 / The Wave (4) 3500'.
Probably: letter from André Lhote to Gabriel Frizeau, 11 November 1908 [in J.-F. Moueix: *Un amateur d'art éclairé à Bordeaux. Gabriel Frizeau* (doctoral thesis, Université de Bordeaux), 1969, pp. 269, 270, 272] – Lhote went to Vollard's to choose paintings for Frizeau, and saw one 'which is too like the one you have [perhaps *Flageolet Player*, W361]. (It's wilder and emptier. Splendid rocks in the foreground, a beach and intensely blue water)'. Lhote encloses a sketch (reproduced here) differing from the present work in certain respects, but made from memory since Lhote 'saw all this rather quickly'; no other known work matches this sketch.
[Review of the Golden Fleece], *Zolotoe Runo* [The Golden Fleece], Moscow, 1908, nos. 7-9, p. 55, repr. (in Russian): indicates that work was exhibited in Moscow in 1908.



Sketch in a letter from A. Lhote to G. Frizeau, 11 November 1908. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

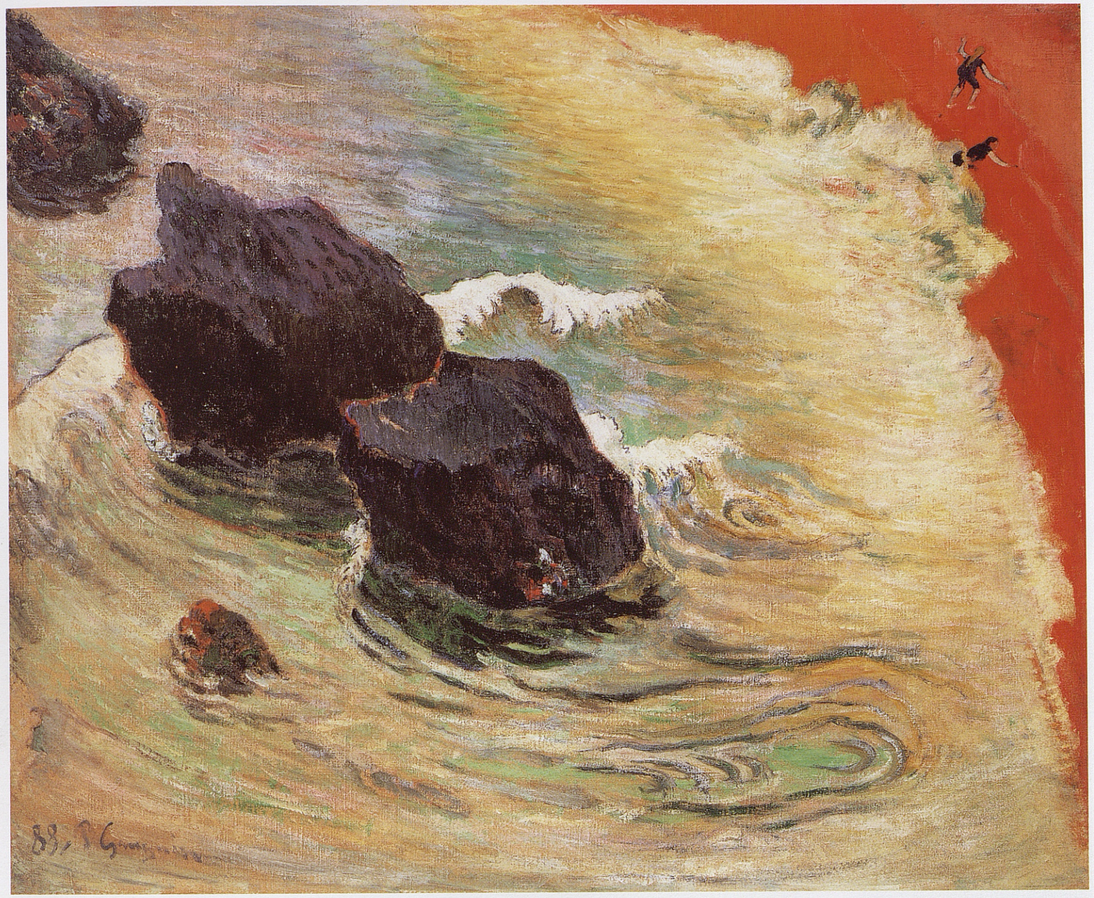
Y. Tugenhold: 'Le paysage dans la peinture française', *Apollon*, Moscow, July 1911, p. 8, repr. with the information: Druet collection (in Russian).
(?) Vollard Archives: Inventory of 1 January 1922: '[no.] 656 Seascape – Oil – 73 × 60 – [valued FF] 3,000'.
Y. Thirion: 'L'influence de l'estampe japonaise dans l'œuvre de Gauguin', *GBA*, special Gauguin number, January-April 1956 (published 1958), pp. 102 (fig. 6), 105-106: Thirion compares this work with Hiroshige's *Naruto Whirlpool* and Hokusai's *Wave*, which it reproduces pp. 103 and 111.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 286 (repr.).
W. Andersen: 'Gauguin's motifs from Le Pouldu', *The Burlington Magazine*, September 1970, pp. 614 (fig. 72, and photo of the motif, fig. 73), 619.
K. Berger: *Japonismus…*, Munich, 1980, English edition 1992, pp. 152-153 (repr.).

Exhibitions:

Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
(?) Vienna, Miethke, March-April 1907, no. 71: *On the Coast, Pont-Aven*, for sale.
(?) *Oeuvres de Gauguin, Cézanne, etc.*, Nemzeti Szalon, Budapest, May 1907, no. 42: *At a Rocky Seashore*. Oil painting.
(?) [French Impressionists], Prague, Manes gallery, October 1907, no. 122: *Waterfall*. This exhibition is known to us only through a list of the works in English translation. All the other works exhibited match those mentioned in the Vollard diary (see **D** above). It seems possible that *Waterfall* is simply a mistranslation for *Wave*.
(?) *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, London, Grafton Galleries, November 1910-1911, no. 26 (*Pont-Aven, 1888*, Druet collection).
Salon de La Toison d'Or, Moscow, 1908, no. 69: *Red Beach*; see **D** above.

Provenance:

On deposit for sale with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890; see list, **D** above.
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 28: *Wave (Rainbow)*, 240 f to Jules Chavasse (on this collector from Sète, see *Aven, 268*, **P**).
This is probably the work that Vollard received from Chavasse in October 1897, with no price specified, which may indicate an exchange; see Vollard sales register, **D** above.
Inventoried at Vollard's in 1899 without any information as to price; see Vollard inventory, **D** above.
Druet, Paris, c. 1911 (label on stretcher and see Tugenhold article of that date, **D** above).
Alden Brooks, Paris.
Filippa Brooks Veren, Big Sur (California).
Mrs F. Brooks Veren sale, New York, Parke-Bernet, 19 May 1966, no. 18 (to David Rockefeller).
David Rockefeller, New York.



303

304
Portrait of a Little Boy

Canvas. 0.23 × 0.23

This portrait is comparable in its subject, and in certain bizarre effects – its oversize ear and alarming gaze – to the *Little Breton Bather (295)* of July 1888. The technique suggests the second part of Gauguin's 1888 Brittany campaign, or perhaps the following year. Should we connect it with a similar but not identical drawing (see opposite *322*) in which the play of shadows may constitute a development of those sketched in here?

Provenance:
(?) Vollard.
Bought in 1956 from the Valloton gallery, Lausanne, by Bemberg.
Toulouse, Musée-Fondation Bemberg.

305
Portrait of Madeleine Bernard

Canvas. 0.72 × 0.58
Signed and dated upper right:
P Gauguin / 88
(the signature seems rather abraded)
W240

Madeleine and her mother came to join Émile Bernard at Pont-Aven shortly before the 14 August 1888. Mother and sister left again in the second week of October, and the portrait must have been painted between these dates. This may have been in very late August or early September, since the manner of the portrait is not unlike that of *Wave (303)*, and we have one indication (see below) that it was earlier than the *Vision (308)*.
Gauguin was running out of canvas at the time (on the canvases painted on both sides that summer, see *Haymaking, 287*), and therefore used the back of *White River (285)*, an earlier and still rather Impressionist view of the Aven (in 'his former manner'[1], as Bernard put it) to paint this more simplified and decorative portrait.

At seventeen ■ Three years younger than her brother Émile, Madeleine Sophie Héloïse Bernard was born in Lille on 14 February 1871. Her parents were Émile Ernest Bernard, a dealer in textiles, and Héloïse Henriette Bodin (they were married in 1867). The relations of both children with their parents seem at times to have been rather tense, but the mutual affection of brother and sister was boundless.
Madeleine was an idealist by nature, and, though but seventeen and a half, had 'the soul of a twenty-year-old'[2] (thus Émile) when she met the little group of artists centred around her brother in Pont-Aven. It included Laval, then twenty-seven, who was soon to become her fiancé (see *Still Life with Laval's Profile, 238*, inset). The enthusiasm with which she adopted their cause seems to have endeared her to one and all. At all events, the fact that Gauguin signed his still life *301* 'Madeleine Bernard' on 15 August shows that she had by no means escaped his notice.
'My sister was very beautiful and very mystical', Bernard later recorded. 'She immediately fell in love with Brittany […]. [Gauguin] painted my sister's portrait, while I painted her recumbent in the Bois d'Amour [Luthi 140]. / Of course, both Gauguin and I did little more than caricatures, given what we then thought about *character*; but the fact remains that Gauguin painted a portrait (not a good likeness but very interesting stylistically) on the back of a Pont-Aven landscape (in his former manner). Of course, Gauguin, [his sufferings] consoled by my sister, whose character was truly that of a saint or an artist, fell in love with her and thought to carry her off; but my father intervened in time'[3].
There can be no doubt that Gauguin was struck by Madeleine's innocence, her lively character and profound purity of spirit (see inset on 'Madeleine'). And we know



304



305



É. Bernard: *Madeleine au bois d'Amour* (Luthi 140). Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

that he told her of his attraction, since the statement 'though I am now vowed to silence'[4], repeated in very similar terms during the third and fourth week of November[5], proves that he made overtures to her, though what he said we do not know.

Madeleine as angel ■ A letter that Gauguin wrote to Madeleine a few days after her departure (before they were forbidden to communicate) gives the tone of their relations at this stage: 'Dear sister', he wrote, 'If […] you want to be somebody, if you want have as your only happiness what your independence and conscience can confer, it is time now to consider this and in three years' time act on it – First you must consider yourself as androgynous, without sex; by which I mean that the soul and the heart, in short whatever is divine in you, must not be the slave of matter, that is, the body – The virtues of a woman are (in every way) like those of men and are Christian virtues – To have a sense of duty towards one's kind based on goodness and unrelenting sacrifice, to allow no judge but one's conscience. Lies and venality are crimes; and in the natural order of things man and woman may give but never never sell themselves. – Every fetter comes from an inferior order of things and any concession to slavery runs counter to divine laws. Be proud and do everything you can to have the right to be proud; do all you can to earn your living it's a step toward that right […] Don't be afraid to cry out to us if you need help – Brother, support me! – We artists too need you to defend and help us, by persuading people […] Accept the fraternal embrace of your elder brother[6].

This tone of fraternal idealism was, clearly, the prevailing one in the Pont-Avennois group that summer, during which Gauguin himself was undergoing a sort of spiritual rebirth (see *Vision, 308*); it was in any case completely at one with Madeleine's elevated nature. But the need to respect the extreme youth of his correspondent was surely also a factor in his Platonic tenor. We note, too, that Gauguin, forty years old and the leader of the group, takes it upon him



Madeleine Bernard in Breton costume. Photo: Émile Bernard Archives.

to play the role of mentor, perhaps thus enhancing his prestige in Madeleine's eyes. Certainly Madeleine seems to have perceived him as distinctly her elder; writing to Émile in October, she asked after 'Mr Gauguin', adding 'give my regards to him and Monsieur Laval'. She also thanked Émile for a photo of Gauguin, innocently adding that she will frame it in 'impressionist embroidery and whenever anyone asks me who this person is, I shall answer The Greatest Artist of the Century[7]'. It seems clear from this that Gauguin had made no 'inappropriate' advances.

Gauguin's advice is admirably lofty. But beneath the angelic tenor is revealed an uncompromisingly modern mentality. Not merely should a woman's principal goal be

'Androgynous'

There can be no doubt that the androgyny propounded by Gauguin in his letter to Madeleine[1] relates to that of Balzac's Séraphita and Séraphitus: 'Angelic Spirits […] who are already, in this world, prepared for the heavens, where they become Angels[2]'. We know that Gauguin was particularly taken with Balzac's *Études philosophiques: Louis Lambert, La Recherche de l'absolu,* and *Séraphita*. His letter dates from mid-October, and suggests that he had already read *Séraphita*. He often referred to it later in his life, and was presumably struck by its Swedenborgian tendencies and visionary writing. Sérusier, a great admirer of *Séraphita*, arrived in Pont-Aven in September: did he recommend it to Gauguin? In which case, *Séraphita* would have fed into Gauguin's sentiment of elevation at a time when he was increasingly aware of his own spiritual side (see *Vision, 308*). Indeed, Gauguin's letter to Madeleine suggests a system of thought in which body and spirit are at odds. Its idealism is – understandably enough, given his circumstances – expressed in particularly absolute terms. Jirat-Wasiutynski detects a further influence, that of Péladan, in Gauguin's advice to Madeleine[3]. Péladan's novel *Curieuse* appeared in 1885-1886 and includes a neo-Platonic notion of androgyny, there presented as the original state, which the gods brought to an end by the division of the sexes: 'But though all bodies were indeed separated into two sexes, some souls remained androgynous, among them geniuses whose works are filled with grace and strength: Plato, St. John of the Cross, Leonardo, Shakespeare and Balzac'. It also contains direct references to *Séraphita,* and fraternal exhortations similar to those proffered by Gauguin. True, there was another side to Péladan's idealist philosophising: disturbing obsessions that so alarmed the major Paris department stores (these featured as places of temptation in Péladan's chapter 'From *Bon Marché* [a famous department store] to Adultery') that they withdrew all advertising from the paper in which *Curieuse* was being serialised, the *Écho de Paris*[4].

Soon afterwards, Péladan's novel *L'Androgyne* (1891) elaborated an implicitly erotic image of androgyny. But for Gauguin, this, like the many other ambiguous figures that proliferated in Symbolist and decadent literature, can have held little if any appeal.

[1] Gauguin to Madeleine Bernard, 15-20 October 1888 (Merlhès 173); see extract above.
[2] H. de Balzac: *Séraphita,* Paris, 1877, p. 254.
[3] Jirat-Wasiutynski, 1975, pp. 208-211 (**D**).
[4] J. Da Silva: *Le Salon de la Rose+Croix,* Paris, 1991, pp. 17-18.

her independence, acquired by earning her living, but – and here we should remember that he was writing to a young girl of seventeen – she is also entitled to hold back from marriage. This is one of the first expressions of Gauguin's animosity toward the 'venal' 'bourgeois' nuptial contract, a hostility inspired by the failure of his own marriage; it was the first of many such statements. Was he preparing the ground for some future relationship with Madeleine?

A young woman ■ For the moment, then, Madeleine poses before a Forain engraving, *At the Opéra*, which had appeared on the cover of the *Courrier français* of 18 March 1888 (brilliantly identified by Zegers)[8]. Its subject is rather frivolous – life-members in the foyer of the Opéra courting apprentice *danseuses*, the *petits rats* – and any allusion to similar dangers threatening Madeleine's purity is no doubt coincidental. As About tells us, the foyer was a place of insidious temptations. There 'the ignorance and naivety of these twenty-four little innocents' were subject to the advances of Messieurs the life-members: 'they chat with them in little corners, they accept their sweets and even their diamonds as meaningless com-



J.-L Forain: *À l'Opéra, Le Courrier Français,* 18 March 1888. Photo: BNF

pliments that entail no obligation. People are quite wrong to believe the Opéra is a marketplace of easy pleasures and a school of libertinage. Virtue is found there in greater abundance than in any other Parisian theatre. And why? Because virtue is more expensive at the Opéra than anywhere else[9]'.

Madeleine's pose in the portrait, with her head resting on her hand, seems to have been habitual, since there are other portraits, painted and photographic, in which it is seen. Her physical appearance – she was blonde, blue-eyed, slender and of frail health – is known to us from a number of photographs, the many portraits of rather uncertain likeness painted by Émile (Luthi 33, 140, 141, 200, 201, 256, 398), and certain remarks in Émile's writings[10]. Émile tells us that Gauguin's portrait was not a good likeness either[11], and though the shrewd sensitivity that it conveys is not unlike that manifested in a photo of Madeleine taken when she was barely adolescent[12], it is clear from a very vivid snap of brother and sister taken c. 1888-1889 (see p. 450) that Gauguin's picture is somewhat tendentious.

For the woman he presents is one of powerful charms. Like Thérèse de Lisieux, trying, the winter before, to look old enough to become a Carmelite sister, Madeleine has her hair pinned up, which contributes to her knowing air. Though the robe of Marian blue speaks of chastity, the shimmering material of her shawl and the red lining of her coat echo the red of her lips, suggesting a world of quite different possibilities. The line of the chin is pure, but above it, the fine lines of the mouth show slightly bee-stung lips (which were very much to Gauguin's taste; he bestowed them on his mother in his idealised portrait of 1890, W385). When we add the sibylline glance and pointed ear, Madeleine no longer seems that seraphic personality that Gauguin seemingly encouraged her to become. Nor indeed, is she the angelic creature, eyes bathed with light, whom Émile painted at very much the same period, lying full length in the Bois d'Amour. No, in Gauguin's portrait, Madeleine becomes a veritable enchantress.

Sorceress? ■ Bernard tells us that this portrait was in part dictated by the views he and Gauguin then held about character[13], and it thus becomes a sort of transposition, seeking, earlier than the self-portrait *Les*



Madeleine Bernard in her adolescence. É. Bernard: *Manuscrit Madeleine Bernard,* p. 5. Bibliothèque du Louvre (M.-A. Bernard-Fort donation).

Misérables, to 'aggrandize the personality' of the model (see *Les Misérables, 309*, the Symbolist portrait).

Madeleine's oblique glance somewhat foreshadows that of certain Tahitian women in Gauguin's later paintings. About the latter, Gauguin wrote: 'There is an enigma in their gaze', and went on to suggest that there was something very knowing behind the eyes[14]; we should note that, in another Bernard portrait of Madeleine (Luthi 141, 1888, see detail, page 495), her half-closed eyes give her a thoroughly enigmatic appearance.

Here, though, there is little sign of innocence in the half-closed eye with its nonetheless enormous pupil. This is the eye of a clairvoyant. Indeed, Jirat-Wasiutynski compares it with the face of a sorceress in one of Delacroix's series of lithographs for Goethe's *Faust*[15]. It certainly paves the way for the oblique gaze of the creature in *Fruit*, a figure endowed with considerable powers of temptation, who seems to have arisen straight from the unconscious, and beyond it to many other somewhat malevolent figures in Gauguin's later work (see *Fruit, 312*, inset on slanting eyes). The pointed ear

derives partly from the *Self-Portrait (291*, q.v.*)* of the previous spring, partly from the *Little Breton Bather (295)*, and both of these have about them something of the nature-spirit. Such eyes and such ears are the attributes of mythical beings, and suggest extraordinary psychic powers and gifts. Gauguin thus consciously turns Madeleine not merely into a sort of sorceress of powerful enchantments, but into a veritable temptress.

Temptation and renunciation ■ This tendentious portrait of Madeleine seems, then, to draw more on Gauguin's own dilemma than on the nature of his model. No doubt there was an element of courtship in his thus apprising Madeleine of what she might become. Perhaps too, the portrait was a further contribution to his own meditation on the flowering of femininity, which had begun in 1887 with *Two Women Bathing (241)*.

Above all, it surely reflected his need to acknowledge or exorcise an instinct whose power he had begun to feel: the question of temptation was certainly to the fore during this summer, when he painted both the creature of *Fruit* and her true-life equivalent, the Breton women portrayed in *293*. But comparison with the *Vision (308)* probably casts most light on Gauguin's attachment to Madeleine, since, in our view, the Breton woman in profile on the left of the composition is a transposed image of her, and the full lips with corners upturned are a simplified reworking of the lips of the young woman in this portrait. This would confirm our perception of the *Vision* as an image of the mind's struggle to overcome instinct (see *308*), offering a clear indication that, behind the obligatory Platonic tone, Gauguin physically desired Madeleine during her summer holiday, but kept his desire on a short leash. The age difference between them, the solitary and arduous road that Gauguin had chosen, and his status as a married man (at a time and in a milieu in which marriage was the only relation imaginable between a young woman and a man) meant that his attraction to her was doomed.

If this hypothesis is admitted, the portrait is necessarily earlier than the *Vision*, and therefore dates from before the second half of September 1888.



É. Bernard: *Deposition*, detail (Luthi 267). Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Gauguin had no alternative: he had to give her up. He could express himself only on the most lofty plane. Shortly afterwards, he congratulated Bernard on a recent work, surely the *Deposition* (Luthi 267): 'This beautiful image of Mary Magdalene whose love did more to strengthen belief in the resurrection […] it's an admirable *trouvaille*. I consider her now as I do another Madeleine that I have known[16]'. The Biblical comparison suggests how serious his experience of love had been. Shortly afterwards, he painted himself as the central figure in his *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* (W326). But Gauguin's hard-won renunciation was in due course followed by what must have felt like a complete betrayal; see the inset in his later relations with Madeleine.

Madeleine was profoundly mystical by nature (see inset on her personality), and, in his own way, this was true of Gauguin too. It seems likely that her charisma helped the emergence of his own idealistic side, which that summer found expression in works such as the *Vision (308)*. The frustration in which the relationship ended (perhaps one of those that contributed to his eventual illness) caused him considerable suffering, and both the *Vision* and the *Les Misérables (309)* self-portrait allude to this; it also helped him become aware of certain forces within him, soon after sublimated in *Fruit (312)*.

During his second stay in Pont-Aven, in 1892, Émile wrote to his mother: 'I went with David to Port-Manech. On St.-Nicholas beach I thought of the time when



Christ on the Mount of Olives, detail. West Palm Beach (Florida), Norton Gallery and School of Art.

Gauguin painted Madeleine among the kelp[17]'. No such painting is known: did Gauguin ever complete it?

[1] Émile Bernard, 1939, p. 11 (**D**).
[2] Émile Bernard, 1939, p. 11 (**D**).
[3] Émile Bernard, 1939, p. 11 (**D**).
[4] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, c. 9-12 November 1888 (Merlhès 178).
[5] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, third week of November (Merlhès 182), extracts of which are given in the inset on Gauguin's relations with Madeleine.
[6] Gauguin to Madeleine Bernard, 15-20 October 1888 (Merlhès 173).
[7] Unpublished letter from Madeleine to Émile Bernard, in the collection of the Pennsylvania State University.
[8] In the catalogue of the Washington D.C., Chicago, Paris exhibition of 1988-1989.
[9] E. About: *Le Nez d'un notaire*, 1862, édition Nelson et Calmann-Lévy, no date, pp. 26-27.
[10] *Manuscrit M.B.*, c. 1920, p. 5 *verso* (**D**).
[11] É. Bernard, 1939, p. 11 (**D**).
[12] *Manuscrit M.B.*, c. 1920, p. 5 (**D**).
[13] Émile Bernard, 1939, p. 11 (**D**).
[14] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 256.
[15] V. Jirat-Wasiutynski, 1990, p. 67 (**D**).
[16] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, November 1889 (Malingue XCI). [Translator's note:] the French for Mary Magdalene is Madeleine, normally accompanied by the definite article, which Gauguin here omits.
[17] Unpublished letter from Émile Bernard to his mother in the collection of the Musée Maurice Denis 'Le Prieuré', Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

Documents and bibliography:

Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 227: 'Bernard portrait of his sister', the absence of a price indicates that this was a gift.

É. Bernard: *Lettres de Madeleine Bernard 1886-1892*, copied out by Émile Bernard and preceded by *La Vie de Madeleine Bernard*, manuscript in the collection of Bibliothèque du Louvre, c. 1920 (abbreviated as *Manuscrit M.B.*): on Madeleine.



Old postcard of the Saint-Nicolas beach, where Madeleine Bernard posed for Gauguin. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

É. Bernard: *Souvenirs inédits sur Paul Gauguin…*, fascicule collection of a series of articles published in 1939, Lorient, no date, p. 11; on Madeleine, pp. 12, 15, 17-18.

É. Bernard: *L'Aventure de ma vie*, manuscript in the collection of the Bibliothèque du Louvre, finished around 1939-1941, p. 78; on Madeleine, pp. 83, 87-88.

Wildenstein, 1964, no. 240 (repr.).

V. Jirat-Wasiutynksi: *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1975), microfilm version, 1993, pp. 202-215 (puts forward the idea that Madeleine was the muse of Pont-Aven).

É. Walter: 'Madeleine au Bois d'Amour par Émile Bernard', *La Revue du Louvre*, April 1978, pp. 286-291.

V. Jirat-Wasiutynski: 'Émile Bernard and Paul Gauguin', in the catalogue of the exhibition *Bernard*, Amsterdam and Mannheim, 1990, pp. 61-62 (repr.), 67, notes 73 and 74.

Gauguin and Madeleine after Pont-Aven

Gauguin's emotional life in the wake of his failed marriage seems to have been largely untenanted. We know of no lasting liaison before the early 1890s. Hartrick reports that, in 1886, despite 'his later reputation for amorous adventures, Gauguin's one cry then was *Pas de femmes!*' 'I well remember', he adds, 'how sardonic and sarcastic he could be about certain transitory attachments'; their triviality seemed to him despicable[1]. But around the time of his encounter with Madeleine, the austerity implied by Hartick's testimony had given way to a pragmatic attitude: 'Hygiene and coitus – if these things are properly regulated, with independent work, a man gets by', he told Schuffenecker in late November[2].

Among the women whose relations with Gauguin have left some trace, Madeleine was certainly the only one who can be thought his equal in terms of culture and spirit (see inset on Madeleine). Gauguin seems subsequently to have confined himself to more univocal relationships.

Dead end ■ What did Gauguin hope to obtain from Madeleine? Did he, as Émile suggests, plan to elope with her[3]? Or was the letter in which he warns Madeleine off marriage sufficient provocation for her parents to forbid further contact[4]? At all events, this edict came from Monsieur Bernard senior before the start of November and Gauguin could thereafter communicate with her only through Émile.

In the third week of November he asked Émile to present Madeleine with a little pot on his behalf: 'Silence is the order of the day, but I hope that she will think of her elder brother from time to time when she places flowers in it. It's a primitive thing but it is […] an expression of my inner self […]. The pot is cold but has triumphantly survived 1,600 degrees of heat. If you look at it carefully, you might find a little of this heat in it, as in its maker[5]'.

Madeleine herself broke this silence a year later[6], moved by a letter to Émile in which Gauguin spoke of the bitter solitude of his life. In his reply, Gauguin gravely reiterated his friendship for brother and sister alike. He went on: 'My perspectives are sombre and I see no sign of clearer skies, otherwise I could offer you my support in life […]. Despite all the distance that conventions require between a young girl and any male friend, in your hour of distress or sadness, do not be afraid to ask my advice. For now I should like to do as you wish and sign our contract of fraternity. Ask Émile to pick up from Schuff's a big pot he saw me make, it's a rough and ready representation of the head of Gauguin the savage, and let it be yours[7]'. The pot he chose for her was his self-portrait (Gray 66): that of a 'poor devil clenched in on himself in order to bear his suffering', 'face roasted in this hell', he wanted, he said, 'to give her one of my best things[8]'.

Conclusion ■ When, the following year, Madeleine became engaged to Laval, Gauguin was profoundly irritated (see *Still Life with Laval's Profile, 238*, inset). His disillusionment was complete when he quarrelled with Émile Bernard in 1891, since Madeleine – obviously – took her brother's side. According to Émile, she rebuked Gauguin to his face 'right in the middle of the Hôtel des Ventes when he was making the money [he needed] for his departure for Tahiti: "Monsieur Gauguin, you are a traitor; you've […] done my brother a terrible injustice, since he was the true inventor of the art you presume to call your own". And then I saw a very strange thing: Gauguin withdrew without a word[9]'. Bernard elsewhere gave a second and slightly different account of this incident[10].

[1] A.S. Hartrick: *A Painter's Pilgrimage through Fifty Years*, Cambridge, 1939, p. 30.
[2] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, late November 1888 (Merlhès 184).
[3] Émile Bernard, 1939, p. 11 (**D**).
[4] Gauguin to Madeleine Bernard, 15-20 October 1888 (Merlhès 173), quoted above.
[5] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, third week of November 1888 (Merlhès 182).
[6] Madeleine Bernard to Gauguin, c. November 1889 (Malingue XCII).
[7] Gauguin to Madeleine Bernard, November 1889 (Malingue XCVI).
[8] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, late 1889 (Malingue CVI).
[9] Émile Bernard, 1939, p. 12 (**D**).
[10] Émile Bernard: *L'Aventure de ma vie*, manuscript in the collection of the Bibliothèque du Louvre, p. 88.



Pot given by Gauguin to Madeleine Bernard (Gray 66). Paris, Musée d'Orsay. Dépôt des objets d'art du Musée du Louvre (Jean Schmidt donation). Photo: RMN.

Madeleine

Vague but passionate aspirations ■ Madeleine did not wait the three years recommended by Gauguin[1] before courageously attempting to earn her living as an apprentice milliner and as a governess. Early in April 1890, she became engaged to the painter Charles Laval, her elder by ten years (see *Still Life with Laval's Portrait, 238*, inset), whom she had met in Pont-Aven at the same time as Gauguin. She seems to have done so out of a craving for devotion and self-sacrifice, perhaps in this respect motivated by Laval's ill-health. 'I feel the need to devote myself heart and soul', she told Émile shortly after the engagement was announced, 'I don't expect marriage to come as a boon, I don't share the illusion of young girls who expect to find in it some ideal liberty […]. For me, marriage is a way of doing Good and making one's own happiness from the happiness of one's husband and children […]. It's a good thing that circumstances require us to wait a long time [Madeleine's parents had made it a condition that Laval be able to earn his living]. I have time to grow used to this idea and understand what my decision will mean. I don't write to Charles Laval. I didn't reply to his letter […] if this is a sort of deprivation for him, let him be aware in recompense that […] I think of him from far off, I pray for him and hope, as he does, that his efforts will be rewarded. Perhaps he knows nothing of all this. I have never told him […]'[2]
Clearly, Madeleine was not ready for marriage, and the fact that their engagement never came to anything cannot be laid at Laval's door. Indeed, on Émile's account[3], the engagement was never officially brought to an end.
But Madeleine's desire to be the salvation of a fellow-being could ultimately have no other object than her brother. 'I beg of you', she wrote some time afterwards to Émile, 'accept everything from me, at least the little that I can do […] I have no desire to marry, I want just one thing in life, to make myself independent so that I can help you […]. Why should I sacrifice my life to a stranger who may perhaps have no reliable affection for me and who will consider my devotion a duty? You seek a fellow-soul, don't you know that they are rare. For my part, I don't ever expect to meet one. Therefore I shall never marry[4]'.
Madeleine left Paris towards the end of 1891, first for Arcachon, then in June 1892 for England. 'Then, all of a sudden, we were told that she had disappeared[5]'. The advances of a protector had, she said, necessitated this disappearance, though she may also have had her own reasons since she vanished from her family's notice too. She fled to Geneva, where she lived in secret for three years with a woman friend. They were managing the railway-station bookshop when she came across a copy of *Mercure de France* containing an article about her brother. Hearing that he was now living in Cairo, she set out at once. Émile was overwhelmed with joy at her arrival: 'And so she of whom I had been so long and so mysteriously bereft, my veritable soul-sister, was restored to me[6]'. But Madeleine's health, never strong, had declined. She took to her bed on the day she arrived, and died three months later, on 19 November 1895, at the age of twenty-four, of consumption, which she had quite possibly caught from Laval.



É. Bernard: *Portrait of Madeleine* (Luthi 33). François Denis Collection. Photo: Émile Bernard Archives.

Powerful certainties ■ Ill at ease in daily life, Madeleine seemed marked out for a brief existence, but her idealism inspired in her an extraordinary radiance.



Madeleine and Émile Bernard, photo, c. 1889. Photo: Émile Bernard Archives.

'You're quite right, I suffer agonies from the milieu I'm forced to frequent here in Paris', she told Émile[7]. 'Fifty times a day I find myself wishing I might cease to exist […] if life requires so much preoccupation with the material, to the point where one must stifle one's soul and aspirations […]. All the time, I feel as I were lost and must one day find my way again; I don't know where I am and am astonished to find myself in the midst of this world'.. She would have liked to retire to a convent, but felt 'that I must be virile, I must learn to suffer and struggle[8]'. At Arcachon, working for a family who never left her a moment's leisure, she wrote to her mother: 'I would hate it if anyone […] other than yourself should suspect that it is ultimately quite unbearable for me to do what I seem to do so easily and pleasurably, that my soul's interests are elsewhere and that it suffers from being endlessly forced to sacrifice itself[9]'.
Madeleine drew from her profound mysticism resources of courage and faith that she wished to lavish above all on her brother; she often sought to alleviate the 'bitterness' that Gauguin, too, perceived in Émile[10]. 'My very dear and beloved brother […] why such rage against those who offend your integrity and notions. Stay fully in possession of yourself, curb these revolts, whose source, justified as they may seem, is passion. Work in tranquillity, lead a pure life, free of that concern with others that leads to anger, scorn and hatred. We should concern ourselves with our fellow-beings only to help them attain goodness[11]'. 'Be sure that I am always ready to listen to your heart, to try and

console it, by telling it that I understand not just it but each and every one of its afflictions […]. Believe me, be generous, do not be afraid to cast upon the waters that of your soul which you can give. If you can make just one person understand beauty, that in itself is important[12]'.
She confided in Émile her most intimate thoughts, such as these, inspired by a starry night-sky: 'There it is that I dream and feel how great an infinity death affords us a glimpse of. The more I love the beautiful, the more vividly I feel its power over me, and the more I suffer, for it cannot be completely possessed[13]'.
Or again, in a letter that Émile describes as a 'masterpiece of philosophy, religion and love[14]': 'your soul has comprehended that it can, by following the way taught us by the Man-God, arrive at perfection by slow degree. 'But […] we do not come suddenly into possession of God. We are so far off that even in heaven, where the soul is finally disencumbered of the ties and passions that constituted our weakness on earth, even in heaven, which is the possession of God, the possession of the infinite God, there is still increase if we are fully to possess him, and it is this eternal increase toward possession of the Infinite that constitutes heavenly bliss.
To walk the road of complete self-renunciation, of universal love, of great charity and elevation of the soul, we must make unceasing effort; we must know our weakness and be aware of everything that tends to draw us out of the orbit of goodness, and we must seek in prayer the strength conferred by grace. […] Faith you have [she continues] and faith is the substance of Hope – so St. Paul tells us – Faith is the starting point and virtue of everything. If you possess it, go therefore to the source of peace and grace, go to him who teaches us to bear suffering and to love our fellow beings; go to his Sacraments […] where will you find this light communicating directly with our soul, if not in the sacraments that unite us wholly with Him alone who speaks to the heart and the mind? […] Believe, practice and struggle. Raise yourself above yourself, above your passions. Know yourself. See into every one of the mysterious forms of wretchedness massed against our nature; stifle these blinding impulsions. Free yourself of them in order to possess a simple heart, a generous, indulgent, charitable soul, and you will find yourself on the admirable road of Abnegation, the pure Evangelic way[15]'.
'Do not doubt', she adds, 'the power of goodness, for to deny the power of goodness is to give up the struggle of good against evil, and where should we be then? […] I leave you in communion of heart and soul, your sister in the love of goodness and of God[16]'.
Émile copied into the notebook in the collection of the Bibliothèque du Louvre this treasure bequeathed to him by his sister; a sister who had who sought to buttress and nurture his spirit, rather as Theo Van Gogh, at around the same time, devoted so much of his strength to his brother. With his sister's death, it seems, a part of Émile was extinguished.

[1] Gauguin to Madeleine Bernard, 15-20 October 1888 (Merlhès 173), quoted above.
[2] Letter from Madeleine copied out by Émile Bernard, *Manuscrit M.B.*, pp. 45-47.
[3] *Manuscrit M.B.*, p. 14
[4] *Manuscrit M.B.*, p. 48.
[5] *Manuscrit M.B.*, p. 14.
[6] Émile Bernard: *L'Aventure de ma vie*, manuscript in the collection of the Bibliothèque du Louvre, p. 129.
[7] *Manuscrit M.B.*, p. 45.
[8] *Manuscrit M.B.*, pp. 86, 88.
[9] Unpublished letter from Madeleine to her mother, late February 1892, in the collection of Pennsylvania State University.
[10] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, early September 1888 (Merlhès 163).
[11] *Manuscrit M.B.*, pp. 108, 129.
[12] *Manuscrit M.B.*, p. 107.
[13] *Manuscrit M.B.*, p. 51, late 1891 or 1892.
[14] *Manuscrit M.B.*, p. 132.
[15] *Manuscrit M.B.*, early 1892, pp. 131-132.
[16] Unpublished letter from Madeleine to Bernard, in the collection of the Pennsylvania State University, around early March 1892.



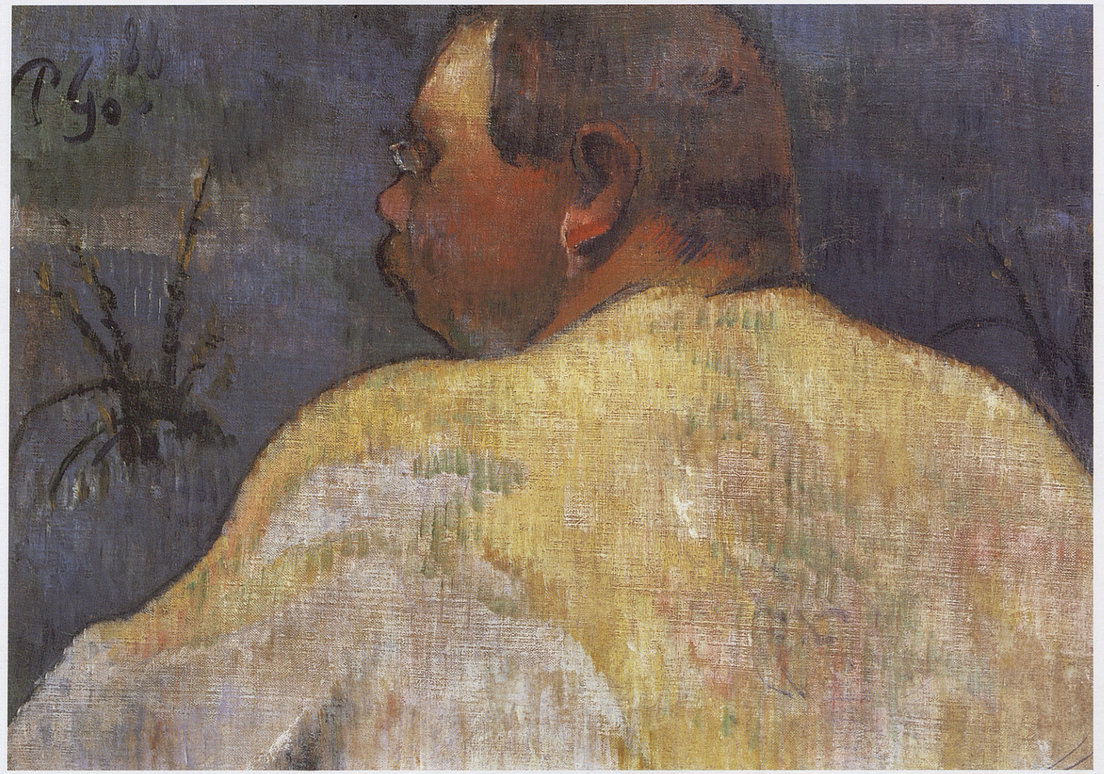
É. Bernard: *Madeleine as Child*, drawing, 1881. Bremen, Kunsthalle Bremen.

Exhibitions:

Only the other side of the canvas (*White River, 285*) seems to have been visible at the *Salon d'automne* of 1906, whose catalogue makes no mention of the portrait.
Ausstellung französischer Malerei, Winterthur, Kunstverein, 1916, no. 60 (the catalogue cites both sides of the canvas, and marks a transition between the preceding exhibitions and those that followed, in which mention is made only of the portrait).
Paris, Orangerie, 1949, no. 7.
Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-1950, no. 18.
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 9.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Quimper, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 7.
Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, and London, Tate Gallery, 1955, no. 25.
Oslo, Kunstnerforbundet, 1955, no. 16.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 51.
Gauguin y la escuela de Pont-Aven, Mexico, Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, 1995-1996, no. 9.

Provenance:

Given by Gauguin to Émile Bernard, probably in 1888: see Gauguin's sketchbook, **D** above. Subject notwithstanding, Bernard disposed of the portrait some time after his quarrel with Gauguin in around 1891.
Maurice Fabre, Paris, c. 1906.
Bought from Druet by Bernheim-Jeune, 20 April 1909 (no. 17308).
Bought from Bernheim-Jeune by the municipality of Grenoble in 1923:
Grenoble, Musée de Grenoble – MG 2190.



306

306
Captain Jacob

Canvas. 0.310 × 0.435
Signed and dated upper left: *88 / P Go.*
W241

Sérusier's testimony[1], cited below, leaves no room for doubt about the identity of the model: Gauguin's portrait is one further addition to the iconography of the Captain of Customs and Excise, Yves-Marie Jacob, an eminent personage in late nineteenth-century Pont-Aven, his bulky mustachioed figure visible in many photographs.
He was born 1 July 1851 at Plestin-les-Grèves in the Côtes-du-Nord, the son of Jean Jacob, head of Customs in the port of Sainte-Barbe at Plestin, and Jeanne Julie Nedelec. Yves-Marie took up his father's profession at twenty-one. In February 1887, he was appointed Captain of Customs at Pont-Aven, which then possessed the sole Customs post of the area (around 1890, a little annex was built somewhat downstream on the Aven, at Rosbras). The Pont-Aven post was a rustic building known to us from an old photo in which the Customs team is also seen[2].
The Captain loved the company of artists. Picnics, bathing parties, excursions in the Customs launch, visits, shared lunches and dinners, and evenings of discussion were the order of the day. According to Le Paul (**D**), Moret made a medallion portrait of the Captain, which for many years ornamented the upper corner of a door-panel in the little café at Rosbras; according to *La Route des peintres en Cornouaille*[3], it was a Moret painting of the revenue cutter that decorated the door of Alan Costiou's inn at Rosbras. A few caricatures of the Captain can also be found in an album of sketches by Gauguin, *Histoires pour Jacques*.
Jacob had not yet arrived in Pont-Aven at the time of Gauguin's first stay, in 1886, and met him only in 1888. Gauguin's maritime past and Jacob's memories of the West Indies – he had spent three years at Pointe-à-Pitre (Guadeloupe) in 1882-1885 – perhaps helped bring them together. The Captain must have formed part of the little group around Gauguin that summer, since Madeleine Bernard, after she had left Pont-Aven, asked Émile to 'send our regards to Mr Jacob, tell him we were sorry to have missed him at the station and give him our address 5 avenue Beaulieu because he promised to send me Breton legends[4]'.



Captain Jacob, photo. Musée de Pont-Aven.

A little still life of 1888 dedicated to 'friend Jacob' (*261*) offers further proof of Jacob's cordial relations with Gauguin. True, Gauguin owed Jacob a debt of thanks; the Captain had 'intervened with the Prefect to settle a matter that could, had it come to court, have caused Gauguin serious trouble[5]'. Our eyewitness of this event is the Captain's younger brother, Joseph Jacob (1867-1955), who placed it in 1886, but this is clearly wrong. Chassé[6] takes it that this 'affair' is the same as the practical joke related by Delavallée[7], in which Gauguin passed himself off as a justice of the peace. (It should be noted that, if this is indeed the same incident, Delavallée was again in Pont-Aven at the same time as Gauguin after 1886.)
Sérusier recounts a trip to Le Pouldu made with Gauguin in the Captain's revenue cutter when the two of them stayed there in 1889[8]; Joseph Jacob remembers that, 'At the Captain's invitation, Gauguin spent eight days at Plestin, where he painted the chapel of Sainte-Barbe[9]'. Plestin, the Jacob family fiefdom, lies some 90 to 100 km from Pont-Aven on the north coast of Brittany, where the chapel stands beside the sea. But we have no other source for this information, and the painting, if it ever existed, has left no traces known to us today.
Gauguin no doubt renewed his acquaintance with the Captain when he returned to Pont-Aven in 1894. In 1895, Jacob retired from Customs at the age of forty-four; Delavallée remembered him becoming a Justice of the Peace in Tréguier, near Lannion. There he died, still a bachelor, on 30 December 1908; his brother Joseph, a customs inspector, came from Le Havre to take charge of matters[10].
The brushstrokes here are vertical as they are in *Swineherd (302)* or the *Breton Woman and Goose* (*307*). But the 'synthetic', almost caricatural, boldness of the work, the great stylised arabesque and the distinct outline clearly show that this work is later than the *Little Breton Bather (295)* – with its not dissimilar subject – and can hardly be earlier than September. There is nothing to show whether or not it is prior to *Vision*; but if it was, it would be one of the very first works to adopt such a schematic and stylised form of draughtsmanship. The abbreviated signature *P Go* (on which, see *Cottages*, *266*, inset) is in the same spirit as the experiments then in progress.



Feast day at Pont-Aven, detail of a photo. Marie Derrien stands next to Captain Jacob. Archives of the Musée de Pont-Aven.

The Captain's 'swimming costume' and the handsome blue background suggest bathing parties, while the stylised frondage that cunningly balances the mass of the Captain's back comes from the *Fisherman and Bathers on the Aven (300)*.

[1] Chassé, 1921, (**D**).
[2] Photo published in M. Thersiquel, R. Le Bihan, C. Puget: *Mémoire de Pont-Aven*, 1986, pp. 108-109.
[3] *La Route des peintres en Cornouaille*, Quimper, 1997, p. 104.
[4] Unpublished letter, first fortnight of October 1888, Pennsylvania State University.
[5] Chassé, 1955, p. 65 (**D**).
[6] Chassé, 1965, p. 35, (**D**).
[7] Chassé, 1955, p. 46 (**D**).
[8] Chassé, 1921, p. 23 (**D**).
[9] Chassé, 1955, p. 65 (**D**).
[10] The information about marital status and extracts from the personnel file of the Musée des Douanes come from the archives of the Musée de Pont-Aven.

Documents and bibliography:

Y.R.[Rambosson]: 'Critique d'art. 3e exposition des peintres impressionnistes et symbolistes chez Le Barc', *La Plume*, 15 December 1892, p. 532: 'From Gauguin, we have a Study, the back of a man who is a mountain of flesh'.
C. Chassé: *Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven*, Paris, 1921, p. 23: '"To transport the little luggage that he had from Pont-Aven to Le Pouldu", Monsieur Sérusier told me, "we went on board the excisemen's boat, thanks to the kindness of Monsieur Jacob, the Customs Captain. Captain Jacob! I still remember the very red face that Gauguin gave him when he painted him in his swimming things'.
C. Chassé: *Gauguin et son temps*, Paris, 1955, pp. 46, 65, note 1: Gauguin made terrible fun of a 'a slightly mad woman who was staying at the Gloanec for a while. He set up a whole scene in the Bois d'Amour and made the woman think that she was being prosecuted for indecent behaviour. She was summonsed to my studio [this is Delavallée's account] which had been decorated with auction posters to make it look more solemn. Gauguin was dressed up in a black shirt and claimed to be the Justice of the Peace. For this occasion, he shaved off his moustache'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 241 (repr.).
Chassé: *Gauguin sans légendes*, Paris, 1965, p. 35.
C.-G. Le Paul: *L'Impressionnisme dans l'école de Pont-Aven*, Lausanne and Paris, 1983, pp. 56, 63, note 67 (indicates that Moret's portrait of the Captain went into the Morice collection at Tréboul).

Exhibitions:

3e exposition des peintres impressionnistes et symbolistes, Paris, Le Barc de Boutteville, late 1892 (*Study*): see Y.R'.s review, **D** above.
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1978, no number.
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental du Prieuré, 1985, no. 152.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 49 (exhibited in Paris only).

Provenance:

It is quite possible that the Captain owned this portrait, but we have no proof of this.
Olivier Sainsère, Paris, c. 1936.
Mme Souchère, Paris.
Private collection.

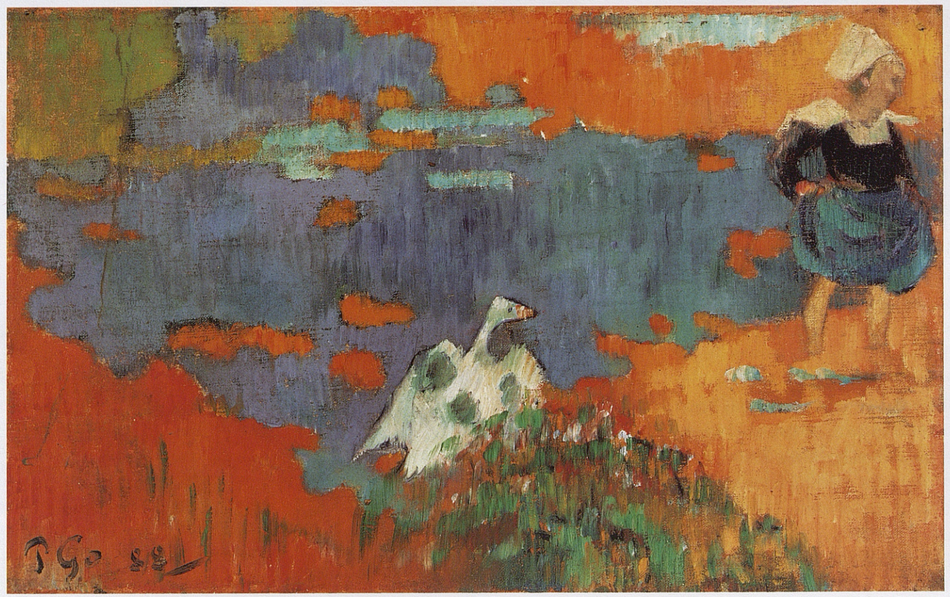
307
Breton Woman and Goose by the Water

Canvas. 0.250 × 0.395
Signed and dated lower left: *P Go 88*
W278

After painting the spring geese of *274*, Gauguin returned to geese in this strange oil sketch, whose subject is clearly summery. Its simplified decorative surface and vertical brushstrokes, analogous to those in the portrait of *Captain Jacob (306)*, suggest that it should be dated to around September. The abbreviated signature is probably among the first of its type (see *Cottages, 266*, inset).
The red background may or may not be prior to that of *Vision (308)*. If it is, it owes a debt to *Wave (303)*, while its very vivid harmony derives from that of the still life *Fête Gloanec (301)*; if it is not, it is a variation on this theme in the wake of *Vision*. It is any case an application of the theory of pure colour that had developed over the summer in Pont-Aven, like Sérusier's *Talisman*, which was painted under Gauguin's direction around this time (see the still life *Fête Gloanec*, insets on colour and 'Red').
This decorative composition, which may be a studio experiment rather than a study from life, comprises very few elements. Among them is the bird, which is not unrelated to those encountered in previous works, and thus has its own import in Gauguin's œuvre (see *To Make a Bouquet, 62*, inset, and *Breton Women Chatting, 237*, inset on geese). The posture of the goose, its wings spread, combines rusticity with suggestions of flight, and came in due course to be all but emblematic; it returned the following year in *Little Breton Boy with Goose* (W367) and in a number of drawings.
In a Bernard painting – *Women Bathers and Swan* (Luthi 147, dated 1888: but is this date accurate?) – we find a bird in similar pose, though with a clear symbolic character. This little painting, by contrast, seems content to seek a balance between evocation and ornament. This distinguishes it from the *Vision*, in which comparable pictorial means are placed at the service of meaning. The Breton woman holding up her skirts lends an almost anecdotal note exceptional in Gauguin's œuvre. She should surely be connected with the two paddling figures in *Breton Man and Woman Paddling*, a work whose attribution is problematic; everything suggests that, with its reddish background and somewhat simplified composition, it was painted in Pont-Aven around the summer of 1888. But by whom?



Unidentified artist: *Breton Man and Woman Paddling*, detail.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



307



308

Documents and bibliography:
List of works in the Fayet collection, drawn up in 1910 at the château d'Igny: *Geese* [valued FF] 800.
H. Dorra: 'Émile Bernard and Paul Gauguin', *GBA*, April 1955, p. 238 (believing this sketch to be from 1886, Dorra though that it had inspired Bernard's *Women Bathers and Swan*).
J. Rewald: *Post-Impressionism*, New York, 1956, pp. 198, 201 (repr.)
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 278 (repr.).
(?) R. Bacou: 'Paul Gauguin et Gustave Fayet', *Actes du colloque Gauguin* […] *1989*, Paris, 1991, p. 28 (cites a *Leda and the Swan* bought by Fayet from Druet in November 1905).

Exhibitions:
Weimar, Grossherzogliches Museum für Kunst under Kunstgewerbe, July-September 1905, no. 8: *Gaggle of Geese*, among works lent by Fayet (in P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven…*, Sigmaringen, 1997, pp. 24-27).
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1906, no. 17 (*Gaggle of Geese*, owned by G. Fayet).

Provenance:
Gustave Fayet, Igny: seems to have belonged to him by July 1905 (see **E** above). However, we should note that Bacou mentions the purchase by Fayet of a picture entitled *Leda and the Swan*, which was bought from Druet only in November 1905: see Bacou essay, **D** above. It was certainly part of Fayet's collection by 1910: see list, **D** above.
The Estate of Hunt Henderson, New Orleans (Louisiana), c. 1956.
Private collection (lent to the Museum of Fine Arts, Saint Petersburg, Florida).

308
The Vision of the Sermon

Canvas: 0.73 × 0.92
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 1888
W245

Gauguin painted the *Vision* under the impulse of an intellectual and spiritual renascence. The result was a work whose qualities of Synthetism and Primitivism – much more pronounced those of *Fête Gloanec (301)*, or *Wrestlers (298)* – paved the way for the painting of the twentieth

century. In the aftermath of its creation, the *Vision* was hailed as a founding work of Symbolism; but Symbolism in the fine arts, as we now understand it, was already in existence, and the *Vision* has a rather oblique relation to it.

Its dating is unproblematic; it was painted during the days immediately following 16 September 1888. Bernard painted his *Breton Women in the Meadow* (Luthi 114) at the time of the great Pardon of Pont-Aven, which traditionally takes place on the third Sunday of September; shortly afterwards, Gauguin painted the *Vision*[1]. It was finished around 25-27 September, when Gauguin sent Van Gogh a detailed description, along with summary notes on his intentions and a little sketch of the painting[2].

The notion of combat and struggle had already made its appearance in the *Wrestlers*[3] of July and, for Gauguin, it was a resonant one. In his letter of 25-27 September, he confessed that he had recently been 'struggling in every way'. During the festivities of the Pardon[4] there were tournaments of 'Breton wrestling', which may well have revived Gauguin's interest in the notion of *lutte*. But the combat here is a Biblical one, and does not, as the *coiffes* in the foreground may, derive from Gauguin's experience of that day.

Why Gauguin should suddenly have taken up a religious subject is a point to which we shall return. For now, we note that his account of the mysterious struggle between Jacob and the angel matches the location described in Genesis[5]. It takes place before the ford of Jabbok, whose waters flow across the upper part of the canvas. There is, however, no Biblical authority for the attendant cow or the Breton women in the foreground, though Gauguin considered them an essential part of the subject: 'In my view, the landscape and the wrestling in this painting exist only in the imagination of those praying after the sermon, which is why there is a contrast between the natural-seeming people and the combat in its unnatural and disproportionate landscape[6]'. This declaration explains why, as early as the exhibition of February 1889, Gauguin adopted the title *The Vision of the Sermon*, rather than the more traditional *Jacob and the Angel*; indeed, a list in Gauguin's notebook c. 1888-1890[7] made in preparation for that exhibition refers to the work as the *Apparition*.

Great Changes

A little preparatory sketch shows one of Gauguin's earliest ideas for the composition[8]. There are fewer figures, and some depth of field is still present; in the canvas the additional silhouettes top left and the tree trunk extended toward the base of the picture render the space vertical – a classic 'Japanese' effect. Far Eastern effects such as overhead views, raised horizons and the layering of space had long since found their way into the work of Degas and many other artists (see the *Wrestlers*, *298*, inset on 'Van Gogh and the Transition…').



Preparatory sketch, Walter sketchbook. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des arts graphiques, fonds du Musée d'Orsay. Photo: RMN.



K. Hokusai: *Wrestlers*, detail of a page of the *Mangwa*. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



K. Hokusai: *Wrestlers*, detail of a page of the *Mangwa*. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

A sort of print ■ In the *Vision*, the Japanese allusions are more extensive than ever. There are the wrestlers, who were, Bernard says, 'borrowed from a Japanese album[9]'; though no identical group has been detected in Hokusai's *Mangwa*, a number of authors reproduce pairs of wrestlers that might have inspired the position of a back, legs or arms[10]. There is the diagonal of the trunk, which contrasts with the little figures in the background and is notably reminiscent of the Hiroshige print *Blossoming Plum Trees*. We know that Van Gogh had copied the Hiroshige the previous autumn (F371), and he may have shown it to Gauguin. And, finally, there is the red, which may also be Japanese (see the paragraph on red below).



K. Hokusai: *Woman under a Tree*, engraving. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



V. Van Gogh: *Plum Trees in Blossom* (F371), after a print by Hiroshige. Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).

Above all, there is the almost completely flat surface. Here the areas of flat colour that made their first appearance in *Fête Gloanec* are used systematically, while the outlines tend to level everything with the plane of the canvas, minimising any surviving relief. It is an effect that places the *Vision* squarely in the second-wave of *japonisme* of Van Gogh and the Cloisonnistes (see *Wrestlers*, *298*, inset on 'Van Gogh and the Transition…'), making it into a sort of 'imitation print'.

Imitation stained-glass ■ The little 'plates' of neatly outlined colour in certain areas of the painting were perhaps inspired by the very daring paintings that Bernard had brought with him to Pont-Aven (see Introduction to the second part of Gauguin's stay) and remind us that Gauguin had seen the work of the *Cloisonnistes* at the Grand Bouillon in late 1887. *Cloisonnisme* derives from various artistic traditions, notably that of stained glass (see inset on 'The Origins of Cloisonnisme'). Indeed, Amishai-Maisels believes that the Vision was directly inspired by the stained-glass windows of Pont-Aven church[11]. This perhaps overstates the case, though the *Vision*'s kinship with those windows is no accident, since the painting was intended to fit in with 'surroundings of stained glass, stone, etc'[12].

The Origins of Cloisonnisme: Stained Glass

The origin of these surfaces divided up into outlined patches of 'flat colour' is not exclusively Japanese (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset on 'Van Gogh and the Transition…). Models could be found in other places: Cézanne's outlines (see below, inset on 'Cézanne and the new style'), popular colour prints (see *Still Life with Fan, 259*, inset) and stained glass. Indeed, Bodelsen[1] suggests that the technical requirements of glazed paint had led Gauguin to foreshadow *Cloisonnisme* in the decoration of a vase made during the winter of 1886-1887, Gray 45.

As to the 'primitive' art of stained-glass, it was attracting ever greater attention. In 1884, alongside the eighth exhibition of the Union centrale des Arts décoratifs, a little show had been organised on the first floor of the palais de l'Industrie. It claimed to display 'for the first time, as a whole and in a general survey, the little known history of French artists in stained glass from the 11th to the 17th centuries[2]'. The experiment proved so successful that when the exhibition closed, it was decreed that a permanent exhibition space must be found for this art. The first Museum of Stained Glass opened in the one of the halls of the palais de l'Industrie in 1885.

It seems likely that Anquetin and Bernard's interest in this museum had already begun by spring 1887, when they were finalising their *Cloisonniste* project. There is a striking analogy between stained glass and the compartmentalised surfaces full of bright colours that feature in Anquetin's *Reaper* and *Avenue de Clichy* (the latter is reproduced opposite the still life *Fête Gloanec (301)*. Bernard later described *Cloisonniste* pictures as 'great stained-glass windows'; he also claimed that he had been the first to speak to Anquetin about 'Gothic tapestries and stained glass'. He had, he said, 'fallen in love with them', his passion the greater because 'at the time, artists were completely ignoring them[3]'.

Moreover, they were interested in stained glass as such. According to Dujardin, the sustained yellows and blues that give their tonality to Anquetin's works were conscious imitations of the 'effect of a landscape seen through stained glass[4]'. In 1887, Bernard painted the window-panes of his room in Saint-Briac[5], and, according to Le Paul[6], did the same for the attic rooms of Louise Lamour in Pont-Aven (see portrait *292*).

In 1888, stained glass had caught the interest of Van Gogh too; he wanted to put 'colours like [those of] stained glass windows and drawings with strong lines' into his paintings[7]. On 18 August, he told Bernard that he found in the *Sunflowers* 'effects like the stained glass of Gothic churches[8]'. Bernard immediately showed the letter to Gauguin.

Moreover, in his memoirs[9], the painter Hartrick states that, in his view, 'the crucial change in [Gauguin's] style came from his study of stained glass' – though he seems to place this change in 1889. He also claims that in 1889, Gauguin experimented with 'glass design'.

[1] M. Bodelsen: 'The Missing Link in Gauguin's Cloisonism', *GBA*, May-June 1959, pp. 329-344.
[2] *Catalogue illustré de l'Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs*, Paris, 1884, p. 142.
[3] E. Bernard: 'Louis Anquetin artiste peintre', *Mercure de France*, 1 November 1932, p. 594.
[4] E. Dujardin: 'Calendrier: Aux XX et aux Indépendants: Le Cloisonisme*', *Revue Indépendante*, March 1888, p. 491.
[5] E. Bernard: *L'Aventure de ma vie*, manuscript completed c. 1939-1941, p. 69 (**D**).
[6] C.-G. Le Paul: *L'Impressionnisme dans l'école de Pont-Aven*, 1983, p. 262.
[7] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 18 March 1888 (470).
[8] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 18 August 1888 (B15).
[9] Hartrick: *A Painter's Pilgrimage through Fifty Years*, Cambridge 1939, p. 34.



The Palais de l'Industrie, which housed the first museum of stained glass, perspective view by M. Berthelin. Paris, Musée d'Orsay.



É. Bernard: *Breton Women in the Meadow* (Luthi 114). Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Like Bernard: stylisation ■ Though the japonisme of the *Vision* is more mature than that of the still life *Fête Gloanec*, its treatment of space is, in many respects, less radically frontal. A bolder frontality is also found in another Bernard painting, to which we now turn: *Breton Women in the Meadow* (Luthi 114). This work is famous



V. Van Gogh: Copy of Bernard's *Breton Women in the Meadow*, watercolour (F1422). Milan, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna (Raccolta Grassi).

as the source of both the stylistic formulae and the overall composition of the *Vision*. 'The Pardon of Pont-Aven had just taken place', Bernard wrote, 'and, taking local costume as my theme, I had painted a sunny meadow with a yellow that dominates the composition, historiated with Breton *coiffes* and blue-black groups. Gauguin, starting from this painting, made the *Vision of the Sermon*. (*1*) …in this painting *coiffes* also formed the main motif. His foreground is cut out against the compositional device of an all red background, on which two wrestlers, borrowed from a Japanese album, are made to represent a vision. […] This painting with its flat colours stood out as if in negation of all previous works by Paul Gauguin, and had so many points in common with my *Breton Women in the Meadow* that it positively resembled it. […] (*1*) …Gauguin wanted to know how I had got my blacks, I told him I had made them from Prussian blue; he didn't have this colour in his palette, so he borrowed some from me and made his own from the same product. The whites were compounds of the same blue[13]' (on the systematic use of Prussian blue, see *Little Dogs, 311*, inset).

Gauguin swapped one of his own paintings for *Breton Women*, and took it with him to Arles, where Van Gogh declared it 'simply masterful'[14], and made a watercolour copy of it.

It must be confessed that Bernard's painting is much bolder – more 'abstract' – than the *Vision*. It is a more brutally naïve composition, from which all sense of depth is excluded. Bernard uses emphatic outlines and his schematisation of contours and forms is frankly anti-naturalistic; the resulting deformations make the *Breton Women* an openly iconoclastic work.

But this was the road that Gauguin had now begun to follow. The 'monstrous helmets'[15] of the *coiffes* are radically simplified. The drawing is stylised, like that of Bernard, but also, perhaps, like that of the Japanese masters whom Gauguin was beginning to appreciate (see *Still Life with Japanese Print, 260*) – he later remarked admiringly on the 'forthrightness' of their draughtsmanship[16]. Of course, Bernard too was acquainted with their work.

Like the 'primitive' Cézanne: in search of the 'uncouth' ■ Some of the faces on the left of the *Vision* show a simplification bordering on caricature, which is directly borrowed from one of Bernard's *Breton Women*. Bernard, in his turn, had undoubtedly borrowed them from Cézanne's heavily outlined and deformed *Bathers*, whose faces are barely sketched in. Bernard's aggression and gift for ellipsis seem to have been innate, and the almost inevitable result of his passionate admiration for Cézanne was these abrupt, contorted forms (see inset on Cézanne and the new figurative style).



P. Cézanne: *Five Women Bathing*, 1885-1887, detail (Venturi 542). Basel, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel.



É. Bernard: *Breton Women in the Meadow*, detail (Luthi 114).



The Vision after the Sermon, detail.

Cézanne and the New Style

Gauguin's interest in Cézanne dates from the time they had both spent working with Pissarro (see the introduction to the period 1879-1883, and the still life *144*, inset). But in 1888, Cézanne provided the young 'rebels' with an essential model. Abandoning classical perspective, he had at times reinvented an 'abstract' and primitive space (see still life *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset). By thickening and distorting his line and warping surfaces and volumes, he had laid the foundations for Synthetist outlines and distortions. Sérusier later noted: 'one might readily enough call Cézanne the first practitioner of the *cloison*[1]'.

Cézanne went further than anyone else in jettisoning tradition; he used a direct, naïve approach to form; he even simulated technical clumsiness and brutality. In this way he paved the way for the primitivism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (see *Little Dogs, 311*, inset on naïve painting). His 'crude' manner of the 1860s and early 1870s, in which, it seems, Gauguin had not hitherto shown much interest, now began to make an impact. Bernard was one of the first to realise the full potential offered by Cézanne's innovations, which can be considered one of the major sources of Synthetism. Bernard later recalled: 'In 1887, we were perfecting *cloisonnisme* under the influence of Paul Cézanne; we had discovered the true form of painting […] we went to see the Cézannes in rue Clauzel ['Père' Tanguy's shop][2]. Gauguin himself immediately recognised all that the new art owed to Cézanne. Sérusier records him taking up his brushes during his 'revolutionary' period with the words 'Let's do a Cézanne[3]'. The role played by Cézanne was quickly acknowledged. In 1891, Fénéon dubbed the Pont-Aven school the 'Cézanne tradition[4]'. The group's theorist, Denis, also cited 'Cézanne's barbarism' and the 'clumsily Poussinian style of the Baigneuses' as root components of Synthetism[5].



P. Cézanne: *Four Women Bathing*, 1879-1882 (Venturi 386). Merion (Pennsylvania), Barnes Foundation.

[1] Chassé, 1921, p. 72 (**D**). Sérusier says 'c'est Cézanne qui a cloisonné le premier', using a word for 'outline' (literally 'partition wall' or 'bulkhead') that necessarily refers forward to *Cloisonnisme* (translator's note).
[2] É. Bernard: 'Notes on the "Pont-Aven School"', *Mercure de France*, December 1903, pp. 676-677 (**D**).
[3] Chassé, 1955, p. 50 (**D**).
[4] F. Fénéon: 'M. Gauguin', *Le Chat noir*, 23 May 1891, in J. Halperin, ed: *Félix Fénéon. Oeuvres plus que complètes*, Geneva, 1970, p. 192.
[5] M. Denis: 'La Peinture', *L'Ermitage*, 15 May 1905, p. 314; 'De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au classicisme', *L'Occident*, May 1909, p. 188.

Gauguin had made spontaneous use of such deformations for purely expressive purposes in the *Wrestlers* of July; from the *Vision* on, with Bernard's encouragement, they became an acknowledged part of his style. Though their lineage is partly Japanese, the influence of Cézanne is no less certainly and powerfully present. Aurier soon after (1891) formulated his theory of 'subjective deformation' (see inset on Synthetism, paragraph on 'Internal synthesis')[17].

The aspiration toward a form of stylisation more or less directly inspired by 'primitive' art was in the air at the time. In Seurat's work, a similar aspiration had manifested itself a few years earlier; Fénéon remarks on Seurat's 'succinct, hieratic line[18]'. The quest for the primitive expressed certain of the fundamental yearnings of the time (insets on 'Synthetism' and 'Other civilisations').

Red ■ The notorious red of the soil here is reminiscent of that in the background of *Fête Gloanec (301)* where it also appears among a series of complementary colours (see *Fête Gloanec*, insets on 'Red' and 'Complementaries'). The source in either case may have been the print visible in a still life from early that year (*260*), in which case it, too, has a Japanese lineage. However, the red now has, as we shall see, a further function, being 'suggestive' or 'symbolic' of certain passions (see the self-portrait *Les Misérables, 309*, inset on colour). This said, Gauguin intended the work for the church of Pont-Aven, and noted that his 'pure vermilion' 'in the church, darkens and becomes red-brown[19]', thus reinforcing the rather austere 'primitivism' of the work.



The red print, detail of *260*. Photo: former Druet-Vizzavona collection, Musées nationaux de France.

We see, then, that the 'abstraction' – the term is used by Gauguin and Van Gogh alike – that had governed the unrealistic space and colour of *Fête Gloanec* (q.v.) has come to pervade both the line and the forms of the *Vision*. It is, however, the 'primitive' flavour of this 'abstraction' that makes the *Vision* not merely *japoniste* and *Cloisonniste* but Synthetist as such (see inset on 'Synthetism').

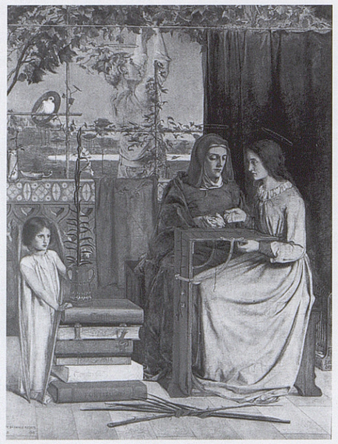
The Spirit of the Primitives

Gauguin had reached this synthesis stage by stage. *Wrestlers (298)* shows him seeking the spirit of the primitive, while in the still life *Fête Gloanec* (*301*) he was reaching out for archaising form. Here, for the first time, primitivist ('uncouth' and stylised) form and primitive subject – Brittany and religiosity – become one and the same.

A *faux*-primitive ■ The composition of the painting contributes to its atmosphere. The two lateral figures with their lowered gazes somewhat resemble the kneeling donors of 15th century polyptychs, and the costumes and *coiffes*, so redolent of the remote past, cannot help but evoke the work of the European primitives. This is no less true of the scene of rustic piety itself, which takes its place among the many such scenes painted, often under the influence of the primitives, by certain of Gauguin's contemporaries, for example the Pre-Raphaelites, Cazin, Israëls, Millet, Aman-Jean and others. Nonetheless, we have no evidence that Gauguin was interested in the primitives before 1888. But appreciation of them was

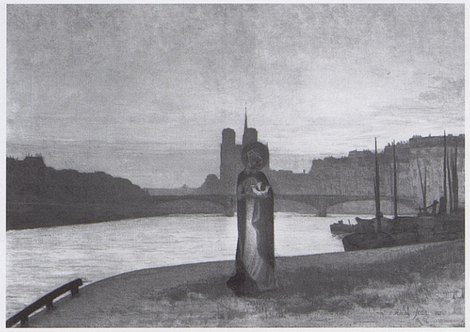
The European Primitives

Irresistible charm ■ The primitives were extremely fashionable in the 1880s. Early in the decade, Soldi had written: 'Painting today scents the danger of emulating the school of the so-called "masters of the apogee": Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and Titian – who are merely a result. In their quest for a new way forward, painters turn for inspiration to the primitives: to Giotto, Ghirlandajo, Masaccio, Holbein, and Albert* Dürer, and the broad, simple naïve way in which they rendered nature[1]'. In 1888, Van Gogh noted that it was the custom to say: 'When I go to the Louvre, I can never get beyond the primitives[2]'. He may have been recording the view of art-students, but love of the primitives was not confined to the younger generation.
Indeed, for reasons which it would be interesting to define, and which must be related to the steady rise of Symbolism, the entire nineteenth century admired the primitives. After the *Barbus* and the Nazarenes of the early nineteenth century, after Ingres, who thought highly of the painters of the fifteenth and even fourteenth centuries, after the Lyon school and the Pre-



D.G. Rossetti: *The Adolescence of the Virgin Mary*, 1848-1849. London, Tate Gallery.

Raphaelites, numerous artists, critics and theorists saw the primitives as the supreme masters. Among them were Degas, who cited not only Mantegna, Pollaiuolo, Ghirlandaio, and Botticelli but the Sienna painters and the Assisi frescoes among his admirations[3]; Millet, who hung reproductions of Giotto and Fra Angelico in his studio[4]; Puvis de Chavannes, who was said to have 'received his education' at the hands of Piero della Francesco and who instilled in his followers a love of Florentine fresco; Bastien-Lepage, dubbed 'the primitive' by his friends because of his passion for Holbein; Pissarro, who wrote to his son 'whenever you can, look at the primitives[5]', and Seurat, whom his contemporaries compared with Memling[6]. For the edification of future generations, Charles Blanc had had copies of Piero made for the chapel of the École des Beaux Arts. According to Russell[7], they were of great assistance to Seurat in particular. In the 1880s, Péladan vehemently preached the merits of the Italians: Giotto, Fra Angelico, and Leonardo[8]; resonating in the echo chamber of the Rose+Croix, his commendations were heard by a large part of the artistic generation of the 1890s. At this same time, Aurier too was insisting on the 'excellence of the right and true tradition: that of the primitives[9]', and exploring the sometimes neglected Primitive works to be found in provincial museums. And in theorising Synthetism, Denis invoked the names of Fra Angelico and Ghirlandaio and 'many other primitive works', paradoxically dubbing this avant-garde movement 'Neo-traditionism', no doubt in reference to these masters[10].



E.F. Aman-Jean: *Sainte Geneviève before Paris*. Musée de Brest. Phot: RMN.

A fount of inspiration ■ The often static, meditative art of the primitives, though it lacks the Renaissance conquest of anatomy and movement, proved eminently accessible – this is particularly true of the Quattrocento, with its realist rendition of the physical – and it interested the nineteenth century under a variety of different heads. It suggested alternatives to the norms of academic style. It opened the door to a timeless world; from Puvis and Moreau onwards, the Symbolists found sustenance for their dreams in primitive works. Above all, it offered the example of art inhabited by faith – the faith that had been lost in a century in which industry had replaced ideals.

In general, the nineteenth century found in the primitives a model of purity and simplicity, and the increasing interest in them in the 1880s and 1890s has many points of connection with the contemporary revival in religion and ideals (see the inset 'Positivism and the Ideal'). Primitive painting was not primarily concerned with the physical world, it was felt, and could therefore serve the anti-naturalist bent. Bernard later wrote: 'All art prior to the Renaissance relies much more upon the invisible than the visible[11]'. The primitives thus nourished a variety of different branches of Symbolism, many of them entirely divorced from aesthetic modernism.

For others, the primitives afforded an example of the simplification of form, a simplification that was, moreover, never gratuitous; it was always more or less apt to the expression of an ideal. This is true of Puvis and his entourage, and notably of the *Saint Genevieve before Paris* by Aman-Jean, which, painted as early as 1885, combines a religious subject with precocious formal simplification.

It was no less true of the Synthetists. In 1888, Bernard was seeking answers to artistic questions in the work of the primitives. 'You are currently examining the technique of the Italian and German primitives, the symbolic meaning that can inhere in the abstract and mystical draughtsmanship of the Italians. You do well', Van Gogh told him, just before Bernard joined Gauguin in Pont-Aven[12]. 'I rather like this anecdote about Giotto. There was a competition to decide who should execute some painting or other of the Virgin. Piles of sketches were sent to the Fine Arts Department of the time. One of these sketches, signed Giotto, was simply an oval, an egg shape. The administration was intrigued – and – convinced, commissioned Giotto. Whether the anecdote is true or not, I don't know; but I like it'.

These somewhat visionary lines reveal the extent to which the Synthetist quest for 'abstraction' was a quest for purity, one of whose inspirations was the primitives; indeed, Van Gogh's words suggest an 'internalisation' that may at times have bordered on artistic mysticism. Gauguin must have been forcibly struck by Van Gogh's letter when Bernard showed it to him.

Bernard's own Catholicism had no doubt encouraged him to turn to the primitives. Much later in his life, he claimed to have made a clear connection between personal faith and a new style inspired by the European Primitives. Speaking of the religious revival and the medievalising tendencies of contemporary literature, he wrote '…prepared by my religious origins, by my enthusiasm for the ceremonies of the Church, by the sublimity of the cathedrals and the mysticism of Brittany […] I realised how much painting [stood to gain] by a return to its sources, and by taking for its own both the spirit of the earliest masters and the current flowering in the world of letters[13]'. However, these retrospective claims seem to confuse the early years of Synthetism, on which the medievalising faith of Bernard left few traces, with the early 1890s, when the fashion for the medieval was at its height; this was true both of Bernard, who had just met Péladan, and of many others (witness Moréas' 1890 pastiche, *Le Pélerin passionné*, and the medieval atmosphere of many works by Bernard and Sérusier).

Van Gogh willingly conceded that the primitives occupied no very high place in his personal pantheon[14]; the highest place was, of course, reserved for the Japanese. But he was moved by Giotto, 'always suffering and always full of goodness and ardour, as if he already lived in another world than this[15]'. He must certainly have discussed Giotto with Gauguin, who often repeated a very similar notion, speaking of 'the great love of Giotto' in a letter to Bernard dated August 1890[16], and writing about an Assisi painting 'I find in it a tenderness and love which are completely divine[17]'.

Gauguin repeatedly restated his admiration for these masters, and though no direct trace of this admiration is known to us from as early as 1888, we may reasonably suppose that he was not immune to the very widespread favour that they enjoyed.

[1] E. Soldi: *Les Art méconnus. Les nouveaux Musées du Trocadéro*, Paris, 1881, pp. 159-160.
[2] Letter from Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 24 September 1888 (542).
[3] F. Seven: 'Degas à travers ses mots', *GBA*, July-August 1975, p. 38.
[4] J. Russel: *Seurat*, Paris, 1967, p. 46.
[5] Camille to his son Lucien Pissarro, 9 December 1883 (Bailly-Herzberg 197).
[6] M. Marlais: *Conservative Echoes in* Fin-de-Siècle *Parisian Art Criticism*, University Park (Pennsylvania), The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992, p. 133.
[7] Russel, 1967, p. 24.
[8] Marlais, 1992, p. 50.
[9] G.-A. Aurier: 'Les peintres symbolistes', *Oeuvres complètes*, 1893, reprinted in *Textes critiques*, 1995, p. 105.
[10] P. Louis [M. Denis]: 'Définition du néo-traditionnisme, *Art et Critique*, 23 August 1890, pp. 540-542.
[11] E. Bernard: 'Mémoire pour l'histoire du symbolisme en 1890', *Maintenant*, 26 August 1919, reprinted in *Arts-Documents*, November 1952, p. 5.
[12] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 4 August 1888 (B14).
[13] Bernard, 1919, p. 5.
[14] B12, 23 July 1888.
[15] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 17-18 September 1888 (539).
[16] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, August 1890 (Malingue CXI).
[17] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 233.

already of long-standing, and we can be sure that Bernard had preached their merits to Gauguin (see inset on 'The European Primitives').

Archaic models ■ All the same, Gauguin's manner in the *Vision* is somehow more virile than that of contemporary admirers of the primitives, and we should no doubt perceive in this work more ancient and more rustic allusions.
Several earlier sources for the *Vision* have been suggested. These include a page from the *Apocalypse de Saint-Sever*[20]; but did Gauguin know this 11th century manuscript? Others[21] have detected the influence of Romanesque draperies in the floating skirts of the combatants' robes.
One thing is certain: the painting was made to be donated to a primitive Breton church



Low relief, detail of the tympanum of the basilica of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine, Vézelay. A cast of the tympanum could be seen at the Musée des Monuments français, effectively from 1883 on.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

and executed in a style suited to its intended destination: it was 'made for a church' for 'surroundings of stained glass, stone, etc[22]'.
Bernard emphasised how well the *Vision* suited the old church of Nizon, with its 'Romanesque arches, austere and granite-built, [… and its] heavy feudal aspect', its 'naïve, grotesque saints' and its 'beams carved with bizarre monsters'. 'Gauguin wanted', he added, to hang this very simplistic, slightly grotesque and naïve painting among these objects[23]'.



The Nizon calvary. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

The 'simplistic' manner of the *Vision* may have been at least partly suggested by the Breton calvaries, which are carved into the same granite as the dolmens and punctuate the Breton landscape in somewhat similar fashion. Recounting the effort made during the course of the summer to donate the *Vision* to Nizon church, Bernard explains 'we often went to see [its] old stone Calvary [,…which] played a major aesthetic role in Gauguin's art[24]'. Gauguin was not directly inspired by this Calvary till *Green Christ* (W328) in 1889; but if we accept Bernard's account, which he several times repeated in similar terms[25], by 1888 this ancient monument had won the admiration of the whole Pont-Aven group.

The spirit of a primitive region ■ Now, the purpose of this new style, with its archaic tendency, was to bring out the timeless character of the subject, which was quite 'alien' to modern civilisation. This was not the first time that Gauguin had painted a Breton peasant subject; but here, for the first time, the subject is also religious and para-religious, since the biblical combat is combined with a scene of primitive piety. It was the first of a series of such subjects, which includes the *Yellow Christ*, the *Green Christ* (W327 and W328) and a number of Tahitian paintings. Gauguin described the *Vision* thus: 'I believe that in the figures I have attained great simplicity, at once rustic and superstitious – The whole thing is very severe[26]'.

Other Civilisations

Other forms of representation ■ The nineteenth century had seen an upsurge in Western knowledge of the ancient European and non-European arts gathered under the heading 'primitive'. The opening of Champollion's Egyptian Department in the Louvre had been followed, in 1847, by the inauguration of an 'Assyrian Museum', expanded in 1857 to allow a spacious display of this striking monumental art. Halls of Sumerian art were added in 1881, and, in 1888, the Salle Dieulafoy was given over to ancient archaeological finds from Susa. Japanese art began to reach Europe in the early 1860s. The 1878 Universal Exhibition had been followed by the opening at the Trocadéro of Khmer, Ethnographic and Sculpture Museums, where medieval, Egyptian, Persian and pre-Columbian works were displayed. A Museum of Stained Glass had opened in 1885.

Those weary of academicism had long been struck by the freshness and vigour of these



The Museum of Comparative Sculpture at the Palais du Trocadéro, *L'Illustration*, 17 June 1882. Photo: BNF.

arts. In 1844, David d'Anger admired these 'expressions of profound conviction by men who speak out loudly and emphatically. They dare![1]' Several decades later, Soldi was of the same view: 'the Middle Ages represent strength, power, and invention; disdain for tradition, convention and unity, and sometimes even for harmony; sublime errors, caprice, diversity, contrast – all things with which the spirit of antiquity, governed by its invariable sense of the proportion and harmony of every part, was little acquainted[2]'.

Romanticism played its part in these reactions. But contact with different aesthetics eventually led the enquiring and sensitive to still more unexpected regions. 'So much simple truth [...] It is the springtime of art', exclaimed Soldi in the Egyptian section of the Trocadéro[3]. In 1860, Baudelaire had detected 'the inevitable, synthetic, childish barbarity that often remains visible in a perfect art (Mexican, Egyptian or Ninevite), and which derives from the need to see things heroically[4]'.

Soldi's view, that 'in all nations and in every age, the primitive arts are the same. Go to the Louvre and look at Giotto or Angelico, you will find the same system [as in Egyptian works][5]', was a common one. It was certainly David d'Angers' view; he perceived in a Breton Calvary 'the savage style, a style that reminded me of Egyptian sculpture. In its primitive stage, among all naïve peoples, the character of art is the same[6]'. For Ziem, depth in Giotto was like that in Japanese prints (see the still life *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset on space). Clearly, here were alternatives to a mode of Western representation by now tired and constricted; the most modern sensibilities were struck by the mysterious effectiveness of artworks governed by an alien logic of form.

The 1880s were a decade in which certain artists deliberately turned toward primitive art. Pissarro was one of the oldest of these, advising his son Lucien in 1883: 'Look at the Persians, the Chinese and the Japanese, model your taste on really strong artists; one should always go to the source – in painting, the primitives, in sculpture the Egyptians, in miniatures the Persians[7]'.

The young generation shared this view. Gauguin proffered advice similar to that of his master: 'Always keep in mind the *Persians*, the CAMBODIANS and to some extent the Egyptian[s][8]'; Seurat looked to Egypt, while for Van Gogh, in love with things Japanese, the 'Persians' or the 'Greeks' were also landmark traditions (see *Les Misérables, 309*, inset).

But in 1888, the range of reference – broadened by the exhibitions of the following year – was, for the most part, confined to Europe and Japan (Japanese art was then universally classified as primitive). Thus it was prints (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset on *japonisme*), the painting of the primitives, stained glass (see *Vision*, relevant insets), medieval sculpture (perhaps, see paragraph on archaic models), popular colour prints (see *Still Life with Fan, 259*, inset), oriental carpets (not such an important factor; see *Les Misérables, 309*, and *Blue Trees, 319*, inset on carpets) and popular art, described by Dujardin as 'the continuation of primitive art in contemporary life[9]' that supplied the components of the new aesthetic.

To live and think differently ■ Over and beyond these little-known arts, the nineteenth century had begun to discover the other peoples of the earth: colonisation was in progress, geographical publications were on the rise, and World Fairs had brought the most distant civilisations to the heart of the Western capitals. Thus the 1878 Fair had offered glimpses of Khmer, Egyptian, Algerian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, African, Amerindian and Oceanian culture and crafts.

There was, in any case, no need to cross the ocean. Sometimes backward provincial France was quite as remote and wild. 'Here in Brittany, the peasants have a medieval air and don't seem for a moment to imagine that Paris exists and that we are in 1889', wrote Gauguin in the autumn of that year[10]. By 1888, Bernard was on his third Breton stay.

These glimpses of other civilisations clearly did not allow any very profound understanding, but they did reveal the existence of very different lifestyles and mentalities. And among those ill at ease in modern society (see inset on 'Positivism and the Ideal...'), some thought that these other worlds still held the key to lost forms of knowledge and power – indeed, in Gauguin's circle, to a world invisible behind the barrier of appearances (see inset on Synthetism, 'The Heart of Synthetism').



The Exposition Universelle of 1878, with the Egyptian pavilion lower right. Photo: BNF.

[1] According to D. Delouche: 'Gauguin au regard des autres peintres', in *Pont-Aven et ses peintres*, Rennes, no date, p. 73.
[2] E. Soldi: *Les Arts méconnus. Les nouveaux Musées du Trocadéro*, Paris, 1881, p. 83.
[3] Soldi, 1881, p. 430.
[4] C. Baudelaire: 'L'Art mnémonique – Le Peintre de la vie moderne V', 1863, in *Curiosités esthétiques*, Paris, Hermann, 1968, p. 134.
[5] Soldi, 1881, p. 432.
[6] David d'Angers in Delouche, no date, note 1.
[7] Camille to Lucien Pissarro, 25 June 1883 (Bailly-Herzberg 164).
[8] Gauguin to G.-D. de Monfreid, October 1897 (Joly-Segalen XXXVII).
[9] E. Dujardin: 'Calendrier. Aux XX et aux Indépendants: le Cloisonisme*', *La Revue Indépendante*, March 1888, p. 489.
[10] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, autumn 1889 (Cooper GAC 36).

There is nothing remotely unusual in this reference to the 'superstitions' of archaic Brittany (see the introduction to the first part of his 1888 stay in Brittany). Here faith had remained intact and its popular forms were full of life, as witness the ancient canticle about hell recited by a Breton child to Maupassant, who recorded its lyrical but terrifying verses in 'En Bretagne'[27]. Christian fervour did not, apparently, prevent the survival of other, more legendary beliefs: 'This is a religious land', an old man explained to Maupassant, 'You should never joke about extinct beliefs; nothing ever dies. This, Monsieur, is the home of the druids[28]'. Thus Gauguin's reference to superstition does not, perhaps, imply a bastardization of faith as much as religion still experienced with elemental intensity; perhaps it also implies a primitive form of belief interwoven with the occult.

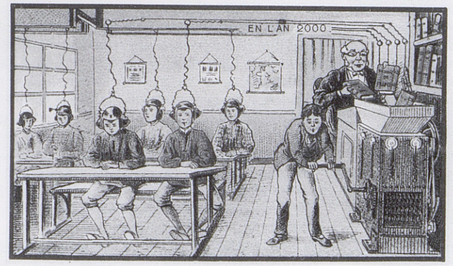
Gauguin's desire to invoke the primitive spirit of Brittany is essential to the *Vision*. Its archaic religiosity conferred on it an atmosphere which was, in the Pont-Aven circle of the time, unique to Gauguin; though Bernard later noted that he had been 'struck by the mysticism of Brittany' (see the inset on the primitives), none of his works of that summer, not even the *Breton Women in the Meadow*, breathes exactly this atmosphere.

In more general terms, this return to the archaic was a symptom of an increasingly widespread interest in other civilisations, and seemed to offer one way out of the suffocating atmosphere of positivist and materialistic modern society (see insets on 'Other Civilisations' and 'Positivism and the Ideal...').

Disputed paternity ■ Bernard undoubtedly helped to pave the way for Gauguin's achievement. There are many aspects to this: his enthusiasm, his avant-garde ideas, the example afforded by his already heavily stylised 'synthetic' works, the uses he had made of the influence of Cézanne, his taste for the European primitives, and his role in the three-way exchange with Van Gogh. In the emergence of primitivist, Symbolist or mystical ideas (see 'The Great Awakening',

Positivism and the Ideal in the 1880s

Positivism: the bourgeois prison ■ Modern society, whose 'Americanisation' and subordination to 'matter' the Goncourt brothers had noted as early as the 1860s, was developing inexorably (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset on the modern world). The rise of the bourgeoisie had begun before the end of the Middle Ages and had now ended in complete domination. Its practical values and way of life conditioned what Maupassant described as 'a dull-witted, utilitarian society[1]', in which many ancient ideals had vanished. Aristocratic values, such as the 'scrupulous integrity' of the honest man, had, to Maupassant's dismay, been swept away by interest and speculation[2]. The noble sentiments were being debased. Maupassant scornfully reports the mixture of patriotism and mass adulation greeting Sarah Bernhardt's return from a foreign tour; the crowds celebrated the home-coming of the 'Muse of France' as if she had been royalty. This phenomenon could, he thought, be attributed to her genius for publicity, which equalled that of 'the Americans, those professors of publicity[3]'.



In the Year 2000, vignette, c. 1900. Photo Kharbine-Tapabor.

The ruling bourgeoisie did not, in Maupassant's view, much appreciate beauty: 'the incessant rise of new social strata continually brings to the surface a tide of plebeians industrious but far from artistic', while the taste of the parvenu wealthy had not, as yet, been much educated[4]. The bourgeoisie, 'bustling and superficial', thought only of its own respectability. As the critic Michel observed in 1884, they liked only such art as was 'easy to accommodate and easy to understand[5]': anecdotal naturalism and frivolous academic art with its bowdlerized view of mythology.

'Literature and art have lost all sense of the divine', Schuré declared[6]. Certainly the descriptive and analytic naturalism then at the height of its influence owed much to the prevailing orthodoxy of positivism.

'Farewell to mystery' ■ There had been something of a revolution in mentalities, effected not least by the popularisation of the works of Darwin and Renan. In 1885, Marcelin Berthelot declared: 'The world lacks all mystery today. Rational thought now claims to illuminate and understand everything[7]'. Blind confidence in progress was increasingly widespread: 'My religion is and remains the progress of reason, that is, of science', as Renan put it; science 'will provide man with the sole means in his possession to improve his condition[8]'. Many of the most influential leaders of the Third Republic were positivists; many of them were also Freemasons, some of whom belonged to the Grand Orient lodge, which in 1877 removed from its constitution any references to the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. By a series of measures, in particular the secularisation of teaching during the 1880s, they set about transforming society.

Finding itself under attack in its temporal powers, the Catholic Church grew obdurate and rejected any compromise with the central tenets of Republicanism though these were fundamentally compatible with Christian views; they derived from the ideals of 1789 and represented moral values that now commanded majority support. Though loss of faith was far from universal, religion's hold over people was weakening. The sacred was no longer synonymous with the divine. Edmond de Goncourt was astounded by the state funeral of Victor Hugo: 'What a strange people these French are! They want no more God, no more religion, and no sooner have they desanctified Christ than they set about sanctifying Hugo and proclaiming Hugolatry[9]'.

A spiritual deficit ■ This perfectibilitarian society was deaf to the voice of mystery and the unknown. Edmond de Goncourt noted that children no longer accorded any value to the poetic and the imaginary: 'scientific toys are the only thing that interests them now [...] Fairy tales and the Swiss family Robinson no longer mean anything to them[10]'. 'The great step has been taken. In certainty we march into the certain', wrote Maupassant[11]. 'And in spite of myself and of my joy at this emancipation', he added, 'I am saddened by the lifting of all these veils. [...] The Invisible has been abolished. And to me, everything feels abandoned, void and mute![12]' Ten years later, Aurier, the advocate of Synthetism and Symbolism, echoed these sentiments: 'Having spent eighty years proclaiming, in its childish enthusiasm, the omnipotence of observation and scientific

deduction, eighty years insisting that no mystery has survived the lens and the scalpel, the nineteenth century has, it seems, at last perceived the vanity of its efforts and the puerility of its boasts. Mankind still walks through the shadow of the same enigmas, amid this same formidable mystery, which has become yet more obscure and disturbing since the habit of its contemplation was lost to us[13]'. Like Aurier, Gauguin was critical of the damage done by an overdose of 'physics, mechanical engineering, chemistry and study of nature[14]' (see inset on Synthetism, 'The Heart of Synthetism').

The backlash of the 1880s ■ During the 1880s, when positivism and naturalism governed the thought and taste of the establishment, a backlash took place in intellectual and artistic milieux. The forms taken by this reaction were various, but almost all of them referred in some way or another to an ideal, and belonged to the groundswell of Symbolism, whose second wave was about to break. Marlais, in his *Conservative Echoes*[15], has described many aspects of this Janus-faced reaction, which was sometimes in thrall to the past and sometimes exceedingly modern.

The need for religion found expression in the many conversions or declarations by literary figures such as Verlaine, Huysmans, Bloy, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Daudet, Retté, and Bourget. The situation was not dissimilar in the world of arts. In 1882, Edmond de Goncourt noted 'the bohemian painter of the day affects a chic composed of reaction and religiosity. He wears a tie-pin made of two hearts linked by a cross: the tie-pin of the elite of the faubourg Saint-Germain[16]'. 'All the masterpieces of art are religious, even for the unbeliever', Péladan confidently proclaimed in his *Salon de 1882*[17]. Contemporary interest in the primitives was strongly connected with this revival (see insert on the European Primitives).

A similar reaction was felt in the Church, which, under this threat, in the second half of the nineteenth century turned increasingly towards new and particular forms of piety, such as devotion to the Virgin, the Sacred Heart, and the saints; pilgrimages proliferated, while the Vatican instituted Papal infallibility. 'Berthelot says that he wouldn't be surprised if the end of the century fell prey to fervent mysticism', Edmond de Goncourt noted in his *Journal* on 23 February 1886.

But the backlash was not exclusively Catholic. Schuré felt that, 'by dint of materialism, positivism and scepticism, the end of this century has completely misconceived the notions of Truth and Progress'. The solution was, he said, 'by meditation and individual initiation', to penetrate the temple of the Ideal, 'the only Reality and the only truth[18]'. Aurier's viewpoint was Neo-Platonist (see inset on Synthetism, 'Synthetism and Symbolism



C. Schwabe: Composition for *L'Évangile de l'Enfance* (in the catalogue of the *Salon de la Rose+Croix*, 1892).

Confused'); he inveighed against the exclusive faith accorded to science (see above), and asserted 'the right to dream[19]'. 'We must react. We must again cultivate the higher qualities of the soul. We must again become mystics', he wrote: 'We must again learn to love, for love is the source of all understanding[20]'. The work of Gauguin was, he felt, 'profound in its philosophy and lofty in its idealism'; as such, it was the perfect example of the 'mystical and idealist art' that he wished to see revived[21].

Such pure idealism was not, however within everyone's reach. Another form taken by this backlash was 'decadence'. Its influence was felt in both literature and painting (Moreau and Rossetti had set the terms for the latter). And here reference to the ideal is rather more complicated. Thus the Rose+Croix, whose official goal was to promote 'the Catholic Ideal and mysticism[22]', was in fact suffused with the turbid, mannered style of the second-wave Symbolism of the 1880s. With the breakdown of confidence in omnipotent reason, some returned to faith, but others were left hopelessly adrift. Others again felt themselves exposed to the terrors of the irrational. Schuré nevertheless felt that the turn of the century was permeated with nostalgia for a lost innocence: '[…] never has the aspiration toward the spiritual life and the invisible world (which materialist theories have attempted to suppress) […] been more serious and real. This aspiration inhabits the regrets, doubts, dark melancholy and even blasphemies of our naturalist novelists and decadent poets. Never has the human soul […] aspired more ardently to the invisible Beyond in which it yearns but fails to believe[23]' (see *Little Dogs, 311,* inset on brutal painting, 'Weakening').

Clearly, the primitivist art that appeared toward the end of the nineteenth century arose partly in reaction to this excessively practical and rational society. In its initial phase, it was, for the most part, idealist: the *Vision* is clear proof of this. In 1891, Aurier spoke of the perfect identity between Synthetism and a primitivist art in quest of the ideal: '*Idéiste* art rises above others in its purity and elevation by just so much as the idea is purer and loftier than matter[24]'. 'This art […] is, therefore, ultimately restored to the formula of simple, spontaneous, primordial art. […] *Idéiste* art seems paradoxical to our decadent civilisations, in their oblivion of any original revelation, [but it is…] identical to primitive art, art such as it was intuited by instinctive geniuses during the earliest epochs of humanity[25]'. But the primitivist reaction was soon to become more existential and follow a course independent of Symbolism (see inset on Synthetism, 'Where Synthetism Led').

[1] G. de Maupassant: 'Chine et Japon', *Le Gaulois,* 3 December 1880.
[2] G. de Maupassant: 'L'honneur et l'argent', *Le Gaulois,* 14 February 1882.
[3] G. de Maupassant: 'Enthousiasme et cabotinage', *Le Gaulois,* 19 May 1881.
[4] G. de Maupassant, 3 December 1880.
[5] See M. Marlais: *Conservative Echoes in* Fin-de-siècle *Parisian Art Criticism,* University Park (Pennsylvania), The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992, p. 34.
[6] E. Schuré, preface to *Les Grands Initiés,* 1889, reprinted 1899, p. X.
[7] M. Berthelot: preface to *Les Origines de l'alchimie,* 1885, in J. Leduc: *L'Enracinement de la République,* Paris, 1991, p. 168.
[8] E. Renan: *L'Avenir de la science,* 1890, in J. Leduc, 1991, p. 168.
[9] E. de Goncourt: *Journal,* 22 May 1885.
[10] E. de Goncourt: *Journal,* 15 July 1882.
[11] G. de Maupassant: 'Au Museum d'Histoire Naturelle, *Le Gaulois,* 23 March 1881.
[12] G. de Maupassant: 'Adieu mystère', *Le Gaulois,* 8 November 1881.
[13] G.-A. Aurier: *Oeuvres posthumes,* vol. III, 1893, p. 293.
[14] Gauguin to C. Morice, April 1903 (Malingue CLXXXI).
[15] Marlais, 1992, note 13, pp. 41-52.
[16] E. de Goncourt: *Journal,* 1 March 1882.
[17] 'Salon de 1882', in *La Décadence esthétique. L'art ochlocratique,* in Marlais, 1992, note 13, p. 45.
[18] Schuré, 1889, p. XXXI.
[19] Aurier, 1893, pp. 294 and 305.
[20] G.-A. Aurier: 'Préface pour un livre de critique d'art', *Mercure de France,* December 1892, p. 332.
[21] Aurier, 1893, pp. 294 and 305.
[22] J. da Silva: *Le Salon de la Rose+Croix,* Paris, 1991, p. 113.
[23] Schuré, 1889, p. XXV.
[24] G.-A. Aurier: 'Le symbolisme en peinture', *Mercure de France,* March 1891, p.159 (**D**).
[25] Aurier, 1893, p. 163.

Synthetism: Primitivist, Inward Figuration

In 1887, *Cloisonnisme* answered a very modern requirement in figurative painting. Though many of its principles were absorbed into Synthetism, they there took on a much deeper significance.

❑ Stylised and Intuitive 'Abstraction'

Painting or photography ■ The advent of photography made changes in painting inevitable, and from the 1860s on, the avant-garde gradually came to focus on the physical materials of painting, on oils and canvas (see also *Les Alyscamps, 316,* inset on coarse materials).

In 1888, Gauguin had nothing but contempt for 'anything mechanical, like photography[1]'. Van Gogh rejected 'the smooth, sweet things' by 'Monsieur Gérôme and other photographic *trompe-l'oeil* [practitioners][2]'. Gauguin went further: 'how earthbound they are, these *peintres pompiers* with their *trompe-l'oeil* [depiction] of matter[3]'. These pseudo-artists were, Aurier declared, spokesmen for 'an epoch exclusively materialist, industrial, and utilitarian, in which […] the painter and the photographer [harbour] the same aspirations[4]' (see inset on 'Positivism and the Ideal').

Impressionism's moment had passed. There were new things to express, and among them, the aspiration toward 'synthesis'. Marlais emphasises how often this word recurs. It had long been used of Puvis de Chavanne[5]; about art in general by Péladan in 1883[6]; about the Japanese, whose 'naturally synthetic taste' Gonse admired[7]; and about the Neo-Impressionists who, according to Fénéon, aspired to 'synthetise landscape into a definitive aspect[8]'. Baudelaire had helped to precipitate this sensibility; since the 1860s he had praised the merits of a 'synthetic and abbreviating vision'. No truly artistic expression was possible, he believed, unless the 'synthesis' had first been 'extracted' by the mind of the painter[9].

In short, a somewhat mysterious aspiration. Was it essentially a need to simplify? Impressionism itself was capable of simplification, but continued to refer to the external world. And the new generation no longer viewed the external world in quite the same way.

Internal synthesis ■ Some critics and artists of the time – among them Dujardin, Aurier, Denis, and, in due course, Bernard – sought to define the principles of this new form of figuration (for Dujardin's thoughts, see the introduction to the second part of Gauguin's 1888 Brittany campaign). In parallel with the Neo-Impressionists, who sought, according to Fénéon, to create 'a higher, sublimated reality[10]', Synthetism was no longer concerned with external appearances, but, in Dujardin's words, with 'the intimate reality, the essence of the object[11]': with what Bernard called 'the invisible sense hidden beneath the mute external form[12]'. This 'ideical significance[13]', Aurier felt, had to be extracted and transmitted into 'the mysterious centre of thought' (Gauguin)[14] by 'the inner eye […] of which Swedenborg speaks' (Aurier)[15].

Emphasising the pre-eminence of mind over nature, Denis thought that 'synthetising […] meant simplifying in the sense of rendering comprehensible. It is, in short, to order hierarchically[16]'. For Dujardin, representing an object required 'seizing on and reproducing – or more precisely producing – the essential trait[17]'. For both Aurier and Dujardin, the object could no longer be represented by an image, however simplified, but by a 'sign'[18], or, in Bernard's term, a 'schema'[19].

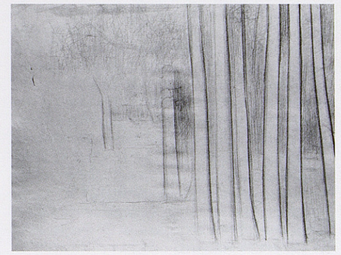
It could even be a 'formal equivalent'[20] (Denis) that translated the object's innermost characteristics and acted directly upon the soul. For, increasingly, as the turn of the century approached, painting made use of its own formal components as a means of expression (see *Fruit, 312,* inset on 'A "Symbolic" Language of Form').

Observation, analysis and reproduction were no longer sufficient; the artist had to open the doors of intuition and transpose. In this anti-rationalist procedure, we recognise a parallel with developments in philosophy; Bergson's *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* appeared in 1889.

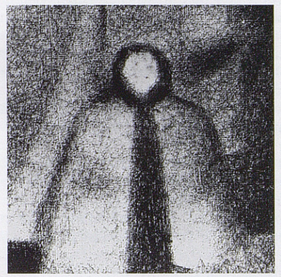
The resulting form of representation was described by Gauguin and Van Gogh in many of their letters as 'abstract', 'suggestive' or 'symbolic'. The self-portrait *Les Misérables (309),* for example, was frequently so described. The meaning of these terms has changed radically since the 1880s: 'abstract' then meant 'anti-naturalist'; 'symbolic' implied the use of non-realistic forms to symbolise the subject. The recommended method for enhancing the degree of this (still figurative) 'abstraction' was painting 'from the head' (see *Human Misery, 317,* inset).

Aurier later explained that the work of art was born of 'the synthesis of two souls, the soul of the artist and the soul of nature[21]', an account so general as to describe all artistic creation. In Synthetism, however, the emphasis lay with the first of these two entities. Representation, deriving from an inward choice, was necessarily personal and might be deliberately inaccurate. Stylisation was a necessary consequence. Bernard later said that he had, at the time, perceived the need to 'see the style and not the object'; he added, about works made 'from the head', that 'it was really myself that I was inscribing[22]'. Aurier took up Moréas' coinage from his Symbolist manifesto[23], and set out, in relation to the *Vision*, a theory of 'subjective deformation' in the pictorial – the *coiffes* in the *Vision* are a good example of this[24]. Maurice Denis later criticised the arbitrary forms taken by this all-pervading subjectivity: 'Today's artist is tempted to signal his debut by some eccentricity or other, and is then condemned to repeat himself *ad nauseam* by rendering his manner ever more extreme and exaggerating his weaknesses[25]'.

Revolution ■ Intuitive, inward; suggestive and therefore 'abstract'; stylised and



G. Seurat: *Tree Trunks,* study for *La Grande Jatte,* drawing, 1884 (Hauke 620). Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago.



G. Seurat: *Nanny,* drawing, detail (Hauke 630). Buffalo (New York), Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Gift of A. Conger Goodyear).

therefore distorting; such is Synthetist figuration. Other contemporary forms of representation shared certain of these characteristics, but the Synthetist vision was more revolutionary than any of them; its rejection of the traditional rendering of form, light and space was more complete.

True, Neo-Impressionism also produced schematic renditions; in certain of his drawings, Seurat comes very close to abstraction. And Cézanne too made use of distortion, deforming space and perspective (see *Fête Gloanec, 301,* inset on space). But,

putting aside for a moment the fact that the technical strictures of Neo-Impressionism made it ill-suited to the expression of emotion, and therefore to 'suggestive' effects, the Neo-Impressionists and Cézanne continued to render atmosphere, which is in some respects the most substantive aspect of space. Synthetism went further in the areas of colour and light; to a still greater extent, it deformed line and abolished depth; in short, it altogether ceased to represent the world as material and three-dimensional. And, as Huyghe tells us, from the early the Middle ages on, material and three-dimensional representation was precisely the form associated with both the gradual rise of the banking and trading bourgeoisie and the scientific humanism of the Renaissance[26].

The heart of synthetism ■ This revolution was accomplished by turning toward models hitherto neglected. At the heart of Synthetism we find the latent malaise elicited by modern materialist society (see inset on 'Positivism and the Ideal' and *Wrestlers, 298*, inset on 'The Modern World'). There it is combined with a new aesthetic input, the nineteenth century's ever-increasing familiarity with 'primitive' arts born of ancient or remote civilisations (see inset on 'Other Civilisations').

Verhaeren later said of certain forms borrowed from Medieval and Oriental art: 'Our contemporary art is weary of itself, and seeks revival by returning to its sources, drawing new strength from naivety and childhood […] Thus driven backward, we take a longer run-up and leap the further[27].' 'Imitation' of the primitive was one way of escaping the paralysis of academic style, photographic rendition and the limitations of realism.

But it went further than that; an obscure need was felt to return to a state closer to the great original beliefs, to nature. Gauguin later said 'In art, we have been through a long period of error, caused by physics, chemistry, mechanics and the study of nature. Artists have lost all their savagery, their instinct, one might almost say their imagination, and have therefore gone astray[28].' The remedy was to take on the attitudes of primitive man, and Gauguin did so more conscientiously and to a greater extent than any other artist; for him it became an entire mode of life.

From the start, Synthetism's creators and spokesmen almost invariably associated it with the art of primitive societies. And many of them – notably those two central pillars, Gauguin and Aurier – explained it in highly spiritual terms. Aurier deemed that the artist must express in his work 'the *idéiste* substratum which is everywhere in the world, and which is, according to Plato, the only true reality'; he was therefore inevitably attracted to 'the very savages, whose



G.-A. Aurier, photo published in *Mercure de France*, December 1892, p. 305.

language, religions, and barbarous artistic efforts often bear witness to an intimate communion with the immanent mind of nature, the soul of things[29]'.

Some years later, a letter to De Monfreid shows us how very clearly 'abstraction' led Gauguin back to the primitive arts, and thus into the world of the invisible and profound: '[Art is] very easy when one looks at nature, very difficult when one wants to express oneself a little mysteriously in parables and to discover forms. […] Distort. Always keep in mind the *Persians*, the CAMBODIANS, and to some extent the Egyptian[s]. […] The human ear needs a hole in it in order to hear, but God's doesn't. He hears and sees, he perceives without the aid of the senses, which are only there to be tangible to humanity; all of that is communicated by fluid, by the soul[30]'.

Bernard later assimilated Symbolism to Synthetism, confirming that: 'Symbolism is essentially Christian, it is creation considered as the divine language, it is the invisible manifested by the visible[31]'.

Van Gogh's observations about primitive painting (see inset on 'European primitives') are similar in kind. Denis sought to transcribe natural objects as 'icons, sacred, hermetic and imposing[32]'. Finally, Morice brings us full circle: the outcome of this quest for origins was simplified forms: 'Hence […] the need for simplifications and to return, by an effort of spiritual will, to the origins, to the time when things appeared in the simplicity of their masses and colours. For tone and detail are mendacious, but colour and mass are veridical[33]'.

We see, then, that Synthetism is a primitivising mystical vision implying belief in a transcendent world. The 'abstract' anti-naturalism of its figuration resulted from the intuition of an invisible world, and sought to offer a way into essential realities, whose permanent and occult nature defied any positivist or analytic approach. Even at the time, it was not expected that the Synthetist 'schema' or 'symbol', this 'sacred icon', could attain the vital energy and magical powers that primitive civilisations – as we now know – attribute to names and representations. But it at least enabled them, they felt, to approach the knowledge of such things at its purest and most immediate. Synthetism attempted to emulate the procedure of primitive peoples because it sought, like them, an intuitive 'short-cut' into a mysterious reality, a primordial knowledge of the sacred world – which modern civilisation had lost – and a return to mystical origins.

Like a child ■ Yet it would be unjust to consider only the ancient or extra-European components of Synthetism, even if these were its most important components; they were certainly the most remarked on. For, in its quest for a 'simple, spontaneous and primordial' art[34], Synthetism had both a father and a mother.

Though it sought inspiration in forms born of primitive or popular cultures, it also attempted a quite different procedure, that of 'imitating' childhood, taking from it not so much childish subjects as a method: rediscovering a childish state of mind, the child's unprejudiced gaze and spontaneous and immediate approach.

The figure who stands behind this attitude is, above all, Cézanne, with his simply astounding independence. Bernard had followed in his footsteps with brutally stylised works, and we know that in August 1888, the topic under discussion with Gauguin and Bernard was how to attain to 'child's painting'. Bernard's *Breton Women in the Meadow* (Luthi 114) was one of the works that paved the way for Gauguin's *Little Dogs (311)* and other such paintings: for a 'lay', iconoclastic painting whose primitivism still seems modern today in the way that it abolishes all reference whether literary, religious or aesthetic (see 'Like Cézanne…' and 'Like Bernard…', above and *Little Dogs*, commentary and inset on brutal painting).

❑ Where Synthetism Led

Synthetism stood at the intersection of three great lines of thought, each of which led in a different direction. There was the anti-positivist, anti-materialist current, which it shared with Symbolism, and especially with Symbolism's more idealist manifestations; the current of anti-naturalism in form, which led toward abstraction in the modern sense (in which Synthetism had gone further than any other movement); and the nascent primitivist attitude, which Synthetism was among the very first to embrace.

These divergent forces subsequently imparted their own very diverse orientations

– some of them diametrically opposed to one another. Some were backward-looking or preoccupied with the timeless; others looked resolutely to the future. Some carried messages, others were indifferent to semantics.

Synthetism and symbolism confused ■ The twentieth century tends, perhaps, to focus on the formal and primitivist aspects of Synthetism, but what its contemporaries perceived from the start was its affinities with Symbolism. Painters and critics of the time for the most part saw little distinction between the two movements. This is notably true of Aurier, who elaborated a formal theory of Synthetism, but whose article on the *Vision* was called 'Symbolism in Painting', and made interchangeable use of the terms 'synthetist' and 'Symbolist'[35]. The same is true of Bernard, who always claimed to have originated 'symbolism' when in fact his principal contribution was to Synthetism; in 1888, the Symbolist connotations of his work were not extensive. Thirty years later, Bernard stated his position thus: 'I intended to reject everything that impeded my vision of things in general and took the synthetist route to symbolism[36]'. Morice was briefer: 'Dream and symbol through abstraction![37]'

There are two partly historical reasons why this assimilation to symbolism took place.

By 1891, many Symbolist writers were, Retté remembered, 'excited – we all were – by the desire to discover painters who were accomplishing a transformation similar to that which we were attempting in literature[38]'. Synthetism's 'abstraction' and transpositions gave it, they felt, the suggestiveness so essential to Symbolism. Its forms were expressive in themselves, and thus attained the evocative power the poets had sought in syntactical and metrical freedom and non-descriptive vocabulary (the poets had laid claim to 'subjective deformation' before ever it emerged in painting).

Certainly the increasing emancipation of form experienced in the late nineteenth century provided Symbolism with the means to express its fascination with the mysterious. In 1886, we find Aurier writing about the young, decadent, Symbolist writers, calling them 'subtle abstractors': '*Harmonism, suggestivism, the dismembering of metre and strophe, pervasive neologisms and wilful obscurity*, all these things are no more than ancillary procedures intended to evoke the subjective vision, which possesses the vague outline of a thing at once real and unreal[39]'.

This emancipation was essential to literature, less so to Symbolist painting, which often drew from it only a sort of musical fluidity; in painting, anti-naturalism was often less formal than thematic, and Symbolist painters often preferred a realist rendition because the credibility of even the most timeless and extravagant dreams was best served by it. Moreover, formal liberation itself led in very various directions, in due course arriving at twentieth century abstraction; on this question, (see *Fruit, 312*, inset on 'The Language of Form').

On the other hand, the Synthetists and those Symbolists who aspired to greater elevation and purity (see inset on 'Positivism and the Ideal') came to realise in the early 1890s that they had much in common, in particular their profound idealism. Many of them admired the Neo-Platonic tradition; Aurier was imbued with Plotinus, Swedenborg, the German philosophers and the great mystics; Morice, the theoretician of Symbolism (his *La littérature de tout à l'heure* appeared in 1889), was a fervent admirer of Plotinus and Judeo-Christian philosophy; Sérusier was a convinced follower of Plotinus, and Bernard combined Neo-Platonism and Christianity. Gauguin cites Swedenborg (see inset on the religious function of the artist), had read Balzac's *Études philosophiques* (see portrait of Madeleine Bernard, *305*, inset on 'Androgyny'), and, as of 1888, his idealism was undeniable. Such aspirations meant that the Synthetists often chose subjects laden with meaning and therefore Symbolist. So it is easy to understand why their contemporaries often considered the two movements similar or identical.

In his famous essay, setting out the artistic theory of Synthetism under the heading of Symbolism[40], Aurier attempted a complete amalgamation: Synthetist anti-naturalism would directly express an idealist vision. Though the beauty of its ideals makes this a highly communicative text, it did little to clarify the question. Aurier shortly afterwards said of Gauguin's works that they were 'Plato artistically interpreted by a savage[41]'. He felt that Synthetist 'abstraction' was itself the expression of the invisible higher world described by Neo-Platonism. In this 'Symbolist' and 'ideistic' figurative painting, which Bernard called representation 'by idea'[42], the artist's eye would 'discern the hypostases of tangible objects'; the 'signs' or 'symbols' of the work would be transcriptions of the 'absolute and essential beings, *[the Platonic] Ideas'* hidden behind appearances. This required the rejection of analytic representation and a 'necessary *simplification in the inscription of the sign*'. 'Ideas' were the 'symbolic correspondents' of spiritual reality, and art was always the 'translation into a special, natural language of a spiritual datum[43]'. Anti-naturalist stylisation and transposition were in this way – almost automatically – profoundly meaningful.

The paintings that inspired Aurier's theories were indeed both stylised and laden with significance. But these two characteristics do not invariably coincide in either Symbolism or Synthetism. Aurier was, in a sense, confusing thought and form; he failed to distinguish between simple correspondences – symbolic images of profound human mysteries, a Neo-Platonic notion handed on to Symbolism by Goethe, Novalis, Swedenborg, Balzac, Carlyle and Baudelaire – with 'sensory correspondences', the direct resonance in the soul of the formal elements of art.

The foundations of Symbolism lay in the first of these, and it did not make systematic use of expressive form as such; whereas Synthetism, 'abstract' and stylised, drew its substance from sensory correspondences, but did not always make use of significant imagery. The convergence of Symbolism and Synthetism was, however, real enough, when the latter sought to convey a profound significance.

As early as the autumn of 1888, describing the new direction of 'abstract and symbolic art'[44], Gauguin annexed new form to new meanings. And he set out their relationship very clearly, when he explained about *Human Misery (317)* – a painting brimming with thought – that 'In this order of abstract ideas I am driven to seek synthetic colour and form[45]'. 'Abstract' thought required 'abstract' form: to convey the 'magnetic flow of thought'[46], nothing could be more apt than this abstract form 'extracted' into the 'mysterious centre of thought'[47].

The strikingly simplified forms adopted by Synthetism inevitably encouraged the critics to read timeless thoughts into them. *Human Misery* is clearly something more than a simple rustic scene, whereas, despite its intellectual content, it is not so clear that the Impressionist composition *Two Women Bathing (241)* is anything more than a bathing scene.

Synthetism eventually took on two different orientations.

Symbolist primitivism ■ The idealist views that it shared with Symbolism often led the



P. Sérusier: *Gathering Broom Flowers* (Guicheteau 8). Private collection: Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.
Breton 'myth' illustrated.



P. Sérusier: *Naik the Fiancée* (Guicheteau 105). Muzeum Naradowe w Warszawie. A specific myth.

Synthetists to choose subjects more or less directly laden with sense. From the early 1890s, the Synthetist form (taken up by the Nabis after the Pont-Aven school) was often used by Gauguin, Bernard, Sérusier, Denis and others to depict not only primitivist themes with archaic tendencies – scenes of Brittany and of children – but religious, pseudo-religious or medieval scenes. These are clear manifestations of a rejection of the modern world. Such subjects come close to the para-literary or the timeless, and refer to specific (e.g. religious) or general (e.g. Breton) myths. They were often executed in a 'mystic' upright format, and display in varying degree an underlying idealist mindset or a historicising dreaminess. And it must be confessed that these works are sometimes lacking in manly vitality or *joie de vivre*. Gauguin showed greater vigour, remaining, even after the Pont-Aven period, faithful to the primitivist Symbolism that he had done so much to shape.

Brute primitivism ■ In 1888, the direct primitivism born of the spirit of childhood – at poles from the literary vogue for the archaic – might have seemed a minor source of Synthetism. Yet it was pregnant with consequences. As Denis remembered it, 'With its almost animal sense, the word "instinct" replaced that of "genius", and anything that was not clumsy, childish, rough-hewn and even crude seemed to us despicable[48]'. Thereafter, many movements,



A. Derain: *Woman's Head*, c. 1904 (Kellerman 361). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

from the Fauves to Cobra and Outsider Art, made use of crude draughtsmanship, a clumsy line, foregrounded materials and a very immediate approach to the act of 'making pictures'.

This direction in art arose spontaneously, answering as it did the needs of a developed society from which ancient forces and values were vanishing. It is as if humanity stood at the centre of a civilisation gradually deserted by God, and could accede to the essential verities only through a kind of primordial nudity. The twentieth century was confronted with a similar problematic, and continued to have recourse to this crude vision of primary energy; many subsequent movements drew their inspiration from it.

Flat surface ■ Denis shortly afterwards gave his celebrated definition of the Synthetist picture, 'a flat surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order[49]', while Aurier, Morice, and at times even Gauguin insisted on the need for a 'decorative' form of painting. No very profound exploration of reality is implied by these principles, which



H. Matisse: *Nude on Blue Background*, 1936. Photo: Matisse Archives.

seem *a priori* somewhat reductive in relation to the goals for which the style was developed.

And it might reasonably be thought that little of the decorative painting of the *intimiste* Nabis partook of the high ambitions of Synthetism. Its subjects are as socially integrated and unadventurous as the Impressionists', and revert to mere *japonisme*. One might equally wish to exclude from Synthetism a number of artists who soon after adopted Synthetism's *japoniste* surfaces – painters like Jan Toorop, and other artists close to Art Nouveau.

Synthetism combined its flat, coloured surfaces with intuitive simplification of outline, and by doing so triggered an emancipation of form taken up by many currents of modern painting. Matisse, for example, placed himself in this line of descent when he said 'I've a woman's body to paint; I shall condense the meaning of a body by seeking the essential lines'.

The inner vision ■ But there was more to Synthetism than this formal liberation, which thereafter served a multitude of purposes. Denis's definition should be understood in the context of his subsequent article, where

P. Bonnard: *The Cheque Blouse*, c. 1892. Paris, Musée d'Orsay.



he states: 'From the canvas itself, that surface layered with colour, the emotion springs out, bitter or consolatory [...] and no memory of any other or older sensation need be interposed (for example, no memory of the natural motif it uses)[50]'. This notion of the unmediated impact of formal elements eventually led to the wholesale disappearance of the subject: to pure abstraction (see *Fruit, 312*, inset 'A "Symbolic" Language of Form). But its immediate emotional effectiveness was soon perceived and exploited by the Fauves, Die Brücke and many other figurative movements in modern art.

The decisive element in Synthetism is therefore quality of vision; the more inward, naïve and primitive the vision, the more Synthetist is the work, be the subject never so quotidian. Thus Bonnard's *The Cheque Blouse* in the Musée d'Orsay might be thought more Synthetist than many of Vuillard's interiors.

The most specific and fundamental trait of Synthetism is thus the primitivism from which it first arose. It sought authenticity through an intuitive approach to the world; the prevailing preconceptions were abolished in the quest for pure vitality and strength of vision, while a formal revolution was undertaken in the search for spiritual and existential regeneration.

[1] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, late October-early November 1888 (Merlhès 176).
[2] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 13-14 and 26 August 1888 (524 and 527).
[3] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 12 September 1888 (Merlhès 162).
[4] G.-A. Aurier: 'Les peintres symbolistes', *Oeuvres posthumes*, vol. III, 1893, p. 296.
[5] M. Marlais, *Conservative Echoes in* Fin-de-Siècle *Parisian Art Criticism*, University Park (Pennsylvania), The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992, pp. 72-76.
[6] In Marlais, 1992, p. 73.
[7] L. Gonse: 'Le génie des japonais dans le décor', *Le Japon artistique*, 2 June 1888, p. 13.
[8] F. Fénéon: 'Le Néo-impressionnisme', *L'Art moderne* (Brussels), 1 May 1887, p. 139.
[9] C. Baudelaire: 'L'Art mnémonique – Le peintre de la vie moderne V', 1863, in Baudelaire: *Curiosités esthétiques*, Paris, Hermann, 1968, p. 134.
[10] Fénéon, 1887, p. 74.
[11] E. Dujardin: 'Calendrier: Aux XX et aux Indépendants: Le Cloisonisme*', *La Revue indépendante*, March 1888, p. 489.
[12] É. Bernard: 'Mémoire pour l'histoire du symbolisme pictural en 1890', *Maintenant*, 26 August 1919, reprinted in *Arts-Documents*, December 1952, p. 10.
[13] Aurier, 1891, p. 162 (**D**).
[14] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 263.
[15] Aurier, 1891, p. 159 (**D**).
[16] See C. Morice: *Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1919, p. 166.
[17] Dujardin, 1888, p. 74.
[18] Dujardin, 1888, p. 74; G.-A. Aurier, 1891 (**D**).
[19] Bernard, 1919, p. 10.
[20] M. Denis: 'De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au classicisme', *L'Occident*, May 1909, p. 192.
[21] Aurier, 1893, p. 303.
[22] Bernard, 1919, note 12.
[23] J. Moréas: 'Un manifeste littéraire – le symbolisme', *Le Figaro littéraire*, 18 September 1886, p. 150.
[24] Aurier, 1891, p. 159 (**D**).
[25] M. Denis: 'La peinture', *L'Ermitage*, 15 November 1905, pp. 316-317.
[26] R. Huyghe: *Sens et destin de l'art*, Paris?, 1967.
[27] É. Verhaeren: 'Aux XX', *La Nation* (Brussels), 20 February 1891, p. 1.
[28] Gauguin to C. Morice, April 1903 (Malingue CLXXXI).
[29] G.-A. Aurier, 1893, p. 301.
[30] Gauguin to G.-D. de Monfreid, October 1897 (Joly-Segalen XXXVII).
[31] E. Bernard, 1919, note 12, p. 5.
[32] P. Louis [M. Denis]: 'Définition du néo-traditionnisme', *Art et Critique*, 30 August 1890, p. 557.
[33] C. Morice: 'Le symbolisme', *Le Gaulois*, 13 February 1891, p. 1.
[34] Aurier, March 1891, p. 163 (**D**).
[35] Aurier, March 1891 (**D**).
[36] Bernard, 1919, note 12, p. 7.
[37] Morice, 1891, note 33.
[38] A. Retté: *Le symbolisme, anecdotes et souvenirs*, Paris, 1903, p. 61.
[39] Albert d'Escorailles [G.-A. Aurier]: 'Sensationnisme', *Le Décadent littéraire*, 13 November 1886, p. 1.
[40] Aurier, March 1891 (**D**).
[41] Aurier, 1893, p. 305.
[42] É. Bernard: *Souvenirs...*, Lorient [1939], p. 13 (**D**).
[43] Aurier, March 1891, p. 160 (**D**), and 1893, p. 303.
[44] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 1 October 1888 (Merlhès 166).
[45] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 8 November 1889 (Cooper GAC 37).
[46] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 December 1888 (Merlhès 193).
[47] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 263.
[48] M. Denis: *Journal* [entries for 1915], Paris, 1957, vol. II, p. 172.
[49] P. Louis [M. Denis]: 'Notes d'art: défintion du Néo-Traditionnisme', *Art et Critique*, 23 August 1890, p. 542.
[50] Louis, August 1890, p. 557.

below, and inset on European primitives), his role was probably not a decisive one, but his example in formal innovation was undoubtedly compelling. Gauguin assimilated what Bernard had to offer without the slightest hesitation, since his own new thoughts seemed, as we shall see, to require new forms.

But when Fénéon's 1889 review of the Volpini exhibition[29] declared Gauguin the inventor of the new style and Bernard his pupil, Bernard was understandably vexed. Aurier's article on the *Vision*, which officially anointed Gauguin head of the new school of painting, must have exacerbated Bernard's frustration, not least because he himself had put Aurier in touch with Gauguin[30]. Bernard never forgave this 'usurpation', and a long polemic resulted[31].

Religious Painting, Spiritual Painting

The greatest surprise in the *Vision* is its subject. Nothing in Gauguin's work had pointed to a work so laden with meaning (and to that extent Symbolist). Its significance is religious, of course, but far from exclusively so; it can be interpreted on many levels, not all of them perceptible at first glance. Gauguin called it a 'religious picture'[32], and a 'church painting'[33]. 'I wanted to give it to the Pont-Aven church – of course, they don't want it[34]', he explained, while Émile Bernard more than once recounted how, after this first refusal, Gauguin attempted to offer the *Vision* to the Nizon church; Bernard, Laval, and, by his own account, Sérusier[35], who had arrived toward the end of the summer, all took part in this expedition (for one of Bernard's accounts, see **D**)[36].

The great awakening ■ We have no record of Gauguin referring to religion before this point. His family were strongly republican in their sentiments; his paternal grandfather owned not only the complete works of Voltaire but Dupuis' *L'Origine de tous les cultes*, a work whose scientific approach did much to discredit religion in the first half of the century (see Chronology, 1855), and Gauguin himself was in all likelihood imbued with the great laicising ideals of the Revolution. True, the eldest of his children had been baptised in the Lutheran church in 1875, but this was probably done for Mette's sake rather than his own, and there is no indication that any other of his children received this sacrament. Perhaps the Gauguins were deterred by the steady decline in Christian affiliation among the urban population of the time. Certainly, Gauguin himself would countenance no church-going; the respectable citizens of Denmark were shocked and considered him 'impious'[37].

And now, suddenly, we find him exhorting Schuffenecker: 'Don't copy too much from nature – art is an abstraction: draw it forth from nature by dreaming before her and think more about creation than its result, this is the only way of rising towards God by doing as our divine master did – creating'. His standard way of signing off with a 'handshake' was now replaced by 'May God preserve you in his holy care' or '*Frater salute*'[38]. A metaphysical dimension had, it seems, arisen to justify the abstraction that he had recommended to Van Gogh only a few weeks before on purely pictorial grounds[39].

Between these two letters, Émile Bernard and his sister had arrived in Pont-Aven. And both the virginal Madeleine (see her portrait, *305*, inset on 'Madeleine') and her brother were believers. Bernard was preoccupied with religion at the time, and he had shortly before written a letter to Van Gogh, brimming with 'quotations from Moses, Saint Luke, etc.[40]'; it had received a magnificent reply, dated 23 June, whose opening words were 'You do very well to read the Bible[41]'. The young man no doubt brought up the subject of faith during his discussions with Gauguin, though whether Bernard himself was sufficiently charismatic to have convinced Gauguin, we do not know.

The principal factor in this sudden spiritual turnaround was surely the letters from Van Gogh that Bernard lent to Gauguin. They are works radiant with mysticism and idealism, conveying Van Gogh's faith in an invisible world, 'the other half of existence[42]'. They express an absolute commitment to

Christ: 'Christ alone – of all philosophers, magicians, etc. – asserted the absolute certainty of eternal life, the infinity of time, the nullity of death, and the necessity and purpose of serenity and devotion[43]'. They set out an all but religious conception of art and an ardent desire to serve that elevated cause alongside an aspiration toward fraternal sharing, this latter associated in Van Gogh's mind with projects of communal living that were partly inspired by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

There can be no doubt that Gauguin was deeply impressed by these thoughts; all that summer, idealist declarations, moral sentiments and fraternal effusions of similar kind flowed from his pen. Indeed, certain of his letters[44] contain ideas and expressions whose presence can only be explained – as Merlhès and others have shown[45] – by reference to statements in the letters of Van Gogh[46].

As Merlhès points out[47], this spiritual revolution was aided by Gauguin's reading of that summer. This may have included Balzac's Swedenborgian *Séraphita* (see *Portrait of Madeleine Bernard, 305*, inset on 'Androgyny'), but the great thing was Hugo's *Les Misérables*. Hugo's deist afflatus makes of *Les Misérables* an 'epic of the soul'. It describes, he says, 'the progress of the soul from evil to good, from injustice to justice, from falsity to truth, from appetite to conscience […] from nothingness to God. Starting point: matter. Endpoint: the soul. Beginning with the hydra, ending with the angel'. It is a work that opens onto the great metaphysical questions: 'What is conscience? It is the compass of the unknown. Thought, reverie, and prayer, these are the great and mysterious bearers of light[48]'. More generally, Gauguin's awakening was no doubt shaped, consciously or not, by the religious and idealist revival of the 1880s when there was a reaction against the excesses of materialism and positivism (see inset on 'Positivism and the Ideal').

The choice of a religious theme is thus explained by a spiritual awakening evident in Gauguin's letters of that summer. Forty years old, matured by the ordeals through which he had passed, distressed by 'this hateful existence which, work aside, weighs on me horribly[49]', Gauguin was finally ready to 'open up' to religion.

The summer of 1888 was a high point in Gauguin's life. The habit of nocturnal reveries, to which he referred in Tahiti, was perhaps born that year; there may be an analogy between these and the mysterious exchanges in the course of which Monseigneur Myriel, the saintly Bishop of *Les Misérables*, 'felt something ascend out of him and something descend into him[50]'. Perhaps, too, it marked the time of his rebirth, a 'spiritual birth' later described by Gauguin as the 'reciprocal fecundation of the feelings and the intelligence[51]'. It was, at all events, the time when he arrived at a faith and system of thought that he never ceased to develop thereafter, and which became the subject of many of his paintings and writings. The *Vision* is the first manifestation of this religious and spiritual quest.

Traditional christian painting? ■ Gauguin was not the first member of the group to tackle a Christian subject. Bernard had painted Biblical scenes the previous year at Saint-Briac, and though his known *œuvre* of 1888 contains only profane subjects, it is possible that he was, as he later claimed, one of the influences that drew Gauguin towards a subject such as that of the *Vision*[52]. Van Gogh himself attempted, in July and again in September, to paint a Christ on the Mount of Olives[53]. It is possible that he described these attempts to Gauguin in a letter that has not survived. We know that the first effort comprised 'a blue and orange figure of Christ, a yellow angel. Red ground; green and blue hills. Olive trees with violet and carmine trunks and green, grey and blue foliage. Lemon sky'. An angel, red soil, violet tree trunk…

And now Gauguin too chose a Christian subject. Would he confine himself to a purely traditional approach? True, he was not, as Bernard was, strictly Catholic. His religious sensibility was, no doubt, more akin to that of Van Gogh, who, though a former seminarist, was only in the loosest sense a Christian. He retained a fervent commitment to the figure of Christ, but was no great admirer of the Bible, and placed the Old Testament on a par with the other ancient non-European religions[54]; and he painted himself as a Buddhist monk, a 'simple devotee of the eternal Buddha[55]'.

This was a time when Theosophy was rapidly gaining ground; it was casting light on the mystic foundations common to all religions, and both Van Gogh and Gauguin (who later became interested in non-European beliefs) found themselves instinctively at one with this expansive vision. But in 1888, Gauguin's religious thinking must have been somewhat halting. And it has left no traces; we do not even know whether he was already reading the Bible, which, in later years, seemed, Colin tells us, to 'hold first place in his admiration[56]'; we do not know whether the admiration for Christ implanted in him by Van Gogh was already a deep-seated one.

For Van Gogh, religious painting was anyway a relative matter. The religious works of the Flemish primitives and the Quattrocento made him, he told Bernard, 'smile a little […] from the religious point of view, not from the painting point of view[57]'. Indeed, only the perfection attained by Vermeer, or the 'metaphysical magic' of Rembrandt seemed to him profoundly religious[58]. And Gauguin, who had read these letters, took up the same view shortly afterwards: 'If we can't have religious painting, what beautiful thoughts one can invoke with form and colour[59]'.

Thus the *Vision*, begun a few days after the letter in which he echoed Van Gogh's views, became a vehicle for 'beautiful thoughts' but not exclusively for those of the Christian tradition. There are several levels to our interpretation of the *Vision*.

The tradition ■ Traditional interpretations of the enigmatic combat between Jacob and the angel already suggest a multiplicity of meanings. Merlhès has attempted a summary[60]. The combat is generally perceived as occurring within the conscience, and more particularly as the confrontation of the forces of Good and Evil within the soul; in Lamartine's words, 'God's inspiration combats the blind or rebellious will of

mankind[61]'. But it is also interpreted as the mysterious struggle in which man battles to attain God by tireless prayer and moral effort, a struggle in which man, 'strained' in 'the hollow of the thigh', declares to his unknown adversary 'I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me[62]'.

It seems that, far from rejecting these traditional interpretations, Gauguin seized on them. His reading of *Les Misérables* could only encourage him to draw his own inspiration from an inner combat; Hugo opens one of his chapters with a direct evocation of Jacob's struggle, wrestling 'hand to hand in the darkness with his conscience, struggling desperately to escape its grip[63]'.

But Gauguin seems to narrow the interpretation still further by introducing a little cow into the scene; the animal is, in his own terms, 'bucking[64]'. This action, rare enough in cows, undoubtedly symbolises the rebellion of the animal nature of humanity faced with the higher demands placed on it – of the 'beast' in man to which several of Van Gogh and Gauguin's letters during that summer refer[65]. Aurier, for one, was not deceived, and saw in the work 'the wild primordial beast tamed by the magic philtres[66]'. And we shall see that the introduction of the two profiles that frame the scene confirms the allusion to this battle against instinct.



E. Delacroix: *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*, detail (Robaut 1339). Paris, Saint-Sulpice. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives. 'God allows man to overcome him, but only after resisting. Man must first seek grace through the trial of good and evil. Struggle is man's condition here below.' (A. Hurel: *L'Art religieux contemporain*, Paris, 1868.)

As for the notion of a struggle to ascend, it was certainly present in the mind of the man who had recently declared that he wanted to 'rise towards God[67]'. Ten years later, Gauguin spoke of the 'reign of God', which would occur when human nature had become completely spiritualised.

Comparing Jacob's wrestling with the battle for a 'complete regeneration' of 'our nature', which was 'thirsting for infinite progress', he went on to say that humanity was in a 'transitional phase'. Jacob, he said, offered a sort of analogy for that phase, 'combating the angel that he does not recognise […] in a darkness insufficiently dispelled[68]'.

Divine mission ■ But of course the *Vision* also contains other, less classical meanings. Almost all the religious allusions in Gauguin's correspondence of that summer are accompanied by references to the role of the artist, which is compared to a mission or vocation, not least in the first such letter, that of 14 August, in which he invites Schuffenecker to 'rise toward God by doing as our divine master did – creating[69]'. It is therefore natural to think of the *Vision* as referring no less to the combat of the artist, and this interpretation distances it from strict religious orthodoxy. It is, on the other hand, perfectly at one with the religiosity that permeated the role of the artist throughout the nineteenth century (see inset on this topic).

Van Gogh and the artist-Christ ■ The letters from Van Gogh lent to him by Bernard powerfully encouraged Gauguin to associate art and religion. This is particularly true of the letter of 23 June cited above, which spoke of Christ thus: 'He lived serenely, a greater artist than any, disdainful of marble, clay and colour, working in human flesh. Meaning that this astonishing, barely conceivable artist […] made neither statues, pictures nor books; he loftily declared that he made living men, […] immortals'. But, Van Gogh continues 'though he did not deign to write books on ideas, […, he] certainly had more respect for the spoken word – for the parable above all'. Van Gogh

The Religious Function of the Artist

From the start of the nineteenth century, there appeared the idea that the role of the artist was a religious one. It lasted throughout the century, variously manifested in Wagner and Hugo (for example) and filling the vacuum left by the gradual ebbing of Christianity. In the 1880s, Symbolist men of letters re-read Carlyle, for whom the great men were 'innovators, those who revealed new truths, the emissaries of God to whom the government and conduct of humanity have been assigned[1]'. This is a conception more or less equivalent to that of Schuré's 'great Initiates', set out in his famous work of 1889. In the 1880s, these ideas were so widely shared that, even for an agnostic like Maupassant, the artist is 'one who gives to his works an almost superhuman power, who places in them the inexpressible charm of absolute proportions and a divine afflatus that is the soul[2]'. Aurier's neo-Platonic views were expressed when, writing about the *Vision*, he described the artist as a 'sublime seer' of the invisible world of 'Ideas[3]'; what these ideas were, and how they related to painting, he did not specify; presumably he was referring to poetic realities, sentiments, and thoughts imbued with the Absolute. Gauguin, too, was party to this notion. He later copied out a Swedenborg *pensée*: 'There is in the firmament a book in which is written the law of harmony and beauty. Men who can read this book are favoured by God. Artists are the true elect, for only they have the power to set down what they read. The artist should be considered a divine messenger[4]'. He also copied out passages from a work on Wagner: 'I believe that this art is of divine origin, and that it lives in the heart of all those illuminated by celestial light […] I believe that, through it, everyone may attain to beatitude[5]'. These much treasured thoughts also went into the *Cahier pour Aline* (1897) and *Diverses choses* (1898). He added, 'God does not belong to the scholar or the logician, he belongs to the poets, to dream; he is the symbol of Beauty, he is Beauty itself[6]'.

[1] S. Rszewuski: 'Chronique littéraire polonaise', *La Revue indépendante*, December 1886, p. 217.
[2] *Revue de l'Exposition universelle de 1889*, October 1889.
[3] G.-A. Aurier, March 1891 (**D**).
[4] Livre d'or de l'auberge Gloanec, in the catalogue of the exhibition *Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven*, Quimper, 1950, p. 62.
[5] Manuscript N.a.fr. 14903, Bibliothèque nationale.
[6] P. Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 271.

cited Christ's own affirmations about the absolute power of his words: "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away". 'These spoken words – which, like a great lord, he did not so much as deign to write down, are among the highest pinnacles – are indeed, the highest pinnacle – attained by art; art in them becomes pure creative force. / These considerations, my dear friend Bernard, take us far, very far, raising us above art itself. They give us a glimpse of the art of making life, the art of being immortal-in-life. And they are relevant to painting[70]'.

Van Gogh's words no doubt raise theological questions about the transcendence of this 'pure creative force'. One might also conclude from them that, just as the spirit is said to be the 'fine point of the soul', so artistic creation, at its finest point, comes close to pure Divine creation. At all events, this powerful exposition had its effect on Gauguin, who repeats some of Van Gogh's terms in his letter of 12 September – 'What an artist was this Jesus, who sculpted humanity[71]'. But even when exhorting Schuffenecker to 'rise toward God by doing as our divine master did – creating' (seemingly authorizing more soul and less spirit), Gauguin cannot attain Van Gogh's mystical incandescence.

Was Gauguin also struck by Van Gogh's description of a painting by Rembrandt (*The Evangelist Matthew*)? Van Gogh took the painting to be a self-portrait by the ageing painter; behind Rembrandt, he wrote, appeared 'a supernatural angel with a Leonardo smile', as if he were Rembrandt's 'familiar spirit[72]'. This image might have suggested to Gauguin the idea of a combat between the artist and his guardian angel, the prize again being the one sought by Jacob: benediction.

Madeleine again ■ But the *Vision* cannot be understood without taking into account its foreground. And Amishai-Maisels has put forward a very fertile hypothesis; she proposes that we recognise Gauguin in the tonsured priest on the right, and Madeleine Bernard in the praying Breton woman seen in profile on the left[73].



Rembrandt: *The Evangelist Matthew*, Paris, Musée du Louvre.

The protuberant eyes and aquiline nose visible in this rear three-quarter profile closely resemble Gauguin, and offer convincing proof that it is indeed he who is watching the scene. His sacerdotal tonsure reminds one of Péladan's somewhat later words, 'Artist, you are a priest[74]', and we may perhaps take it to confirm that the struggle witnessed by the artist-priest is also, at one level, the combat of the artist with his quasi-religious dimension (see inset on 'The Religious Function of the Artist').

Identifying the profile of the Breton woman as that of Madeleine Bernard, with whom Gauguin was then in love (see her portrait, *305*), was a second stroke of brilliance. We know that Madeleine loved to wear the Pont-Aven costume, and that she prayed at the village church. Moreover, none of the other Breton women display those upturned lips, with their exaggerated ruby tones; they are surely Synthetist – indeed, all but caricatural – transpositions of those we see in Gauguin's portrait.

The two profiles are separated by the entire width of the canvas and set on a background 'suggestive' of certain passions (see the self-portrait *309*, inset on colour); eyes lowered, united in spirit, they frame the combat. At this level, then, the combat comes to symbolise the conflict experienced by the artist-priest in the presence of the woman that he has acknowledged he must forego. It should be noted that Gauguin was naturally inclined to such cryptic allusions. The portrait of Mette (*154*) offers an earlier example, dating from 1884; there is some analogy between these two paintings dealing with Gauguin's relationship with women.

Note, too, that the silhouettes of Madeleine Bernard and Gauguin do not appear in the preparatory sketch. The painting would thus seem to have been originally conceived as a reflection on the internal combat for an artistic and moral ideal. By introducing,



Madeleine Bernard in Breton costume, detail of the photo reproduced on page 446.



Madeleine Bernard, detail of the portrait *305*. Grenoble, Musée de Grenoble.

as a counterpoint, the image of Temptation, Gauguin conferred still greater power on his meditation.

Symbolist Painting

The reception of the *Vision* ■ The *Vision* was not at first much remarked on. We know that Theo Van Gogh appreciated the works of this Breton campaign as a whole[75]; that the Brussels public was duly shocked by the formal audacity of the *Vision* at the exhibition of Les XX in early 1889; and that, for reasons unknown, it was not sent to the Volpini exhibition. But slowly and surely it came to be seen as the founding work of Symbolism in painting.

Its canonisation by the Parisian literary milieux came in 1891[76]. Aurier, in a resounding article, sang the praises of its revolutionary form and primitive and religious

idealism. In his view, it displayed 'the ineffable charms of Dream', carrying the spectator back 'to the paradisiacal hours of primitive humanity'. He saw it as resplendent evidence of an 'idealist, and even mystical, reaction'. We should however note that Aurier wrote this in the early 1890s, when idealism held the field (see insets on 'Positivism and the Ideal', and Synthetism, 'Synthesis and Symbolism Confused'), and his audience was more likely to approve the *Vision*'s atmosphere of primitive religiosity than its rough-hewn energy. Pissarro, by contrast, condemned the mysticism so highly commended by Aurier[77].

Symbolist space, symbolist means ■ Gauguin himself declared that he had, at this point, taken the 'symbolic path[78]'. He later gave a sort of definition of his own work, in which he might almost be responding to Moréas' founding definition of literary symbolism: 'Symbolic poetry seeks to clothe the idea in a perceptible form, one that will not, however, constitute its goal, but will, though serving to express the Idea, remain subordinate[79]'. Gauguin stated: 'I act consciously according to my intellectual nature, I act a little like the Bible whose doctrine […] is stated in symbolic form, presenting a double aspect: first, a form that materialises the pure Idea in order to render it more tangible […] this is the literal, superficial, figurative, and mysterious sense of a parable; and then the second aspect, giving its Spirit[80]'.

But the symbol is not, in itself, constitutive of Symbolism; it is its instrument. And the way it is chosen and used is decisive. Symbolism is one of the fundamental movements of the nineteenth century: what purpose did it serve? It was not the expression of faith, as in the Middle Ages; nor that of a world apprehended by a superior intelligence, as in the Renaissance or classical antiquity; nor that of an imagination seeking to remove itself from reality, as in Romanticism; nor that of reality itself, in more or less dramatic and poetic rendition, as in many periods of human history. Its task was to express the soul in all its mystery and profundity; to express those inward impulses of the sensibility that evade analysis, the primal dreamlife by which the soul is inhabited and enveloped, and the turbid and dark forces of the unconscious, and to express these alongside the soul's meditative quest for enlightenment, and its nostalgia for the pure spirit that it glimpses behind appearances.

This tendency had been gradually developing since the start of the century, and had initially assumed rather classical forms, often powerful, profound and idealistic; these are crystallised in the thought and work of Baudelaire. In the 1880s, particularly in painting, in the wake of Moreau and the pre-Raphaelites, the movement gained a second wind. It was now more feminine, often more mannered and murky, and freer in its forms (see inset on 'Positivism and the Ideal…').

The domain of Symbolism was thus vast, introspective and immemorial, and was never susceptible to minute analysis. Implication and suggestion were consequently among its primary axioms: suggestion through form, or thematic suggestion drawing on the timeless realms of mythology and dream.

Thoughts ■ If we accept the definition of Symbolism given by Lecomte in 1892 – 'a very deliberate search for Thought and Dream[81]', the *Vision* is indeed Symbolist, since the scene presented – Breton piety and Biblical combat – is profoundly allusive, leading us to the inner combats of the soul, the subordination of instinct, and the artist's struggle for the ideal, but also to 'mythical' Brittany and its primitive faith.

For what is at stake in the *Vision* is a spiritual message, and Aurier was right to define its Symbolism as 'profound in its philosophy and lofty in its idealism[82]'. It speaks to the mind at large, and this is perhaps what Gauguin meant when he said that he acted 'according to [his] intellectual nature[83]'.

This tendency was certainly latent in Gauguin; had he not, in 1885, detected 'a parabolic meaning' concealed in certain works of Cézanne (see still life *144*, inset)? At all events, very early on, 'symbolic' birds of diverse import found their way into his paintings (see *To Make a Bouquet*, *62*, inset). And certain lines of thought had come to the fore in paintings such as *Two Women Bathing (241)* or *Little Breton Bather (295)*, though there they were clad in realistic forms that made them difficult to interpret. This new form of representation, more universal in its 'abstraction', allowed Gauguin to make himself clear.

Hidden ■ Hereafter, the progress of his thinking can be followed from one work to the next. Paintings apparently very different may in fact be treatments of a single, profound subject; thus the self-portrait *309* conveys thoughts also present in the *Vision* and in *Human Misery (317)*.

This 'Spirit' and these meanings are not, in many cases, immediately apprehensible. 'The book is sealed[84]', Gauguin wrote, and sometimes cannot be opened without a key. This may be provided by comparison with other works (as, for example, the very red lips that betray the identity of Madeleine in the *Vision*) or by Gauguin's own writings (in this case the cow that 'bucks'). In many cases, we no doubt lack such keys.

Dreams? ■ If 'Dream' is present here, it takes the form of the timeless Brittany, still peopled with legends and superstitions, that the *Vision* evokes. There is little oneiric in the Christian mythology of the picture, which might seem somewhat dry relative to the wide range of little-known subjects put to use in Symbolism. The oneiric aspects of



H. Cartier-Bresson: Bonnard's studio, detail. © Henri Cartier-Bresson/MAGNUM.

the *Vision* seem rather to belong to an ideal world than to the dense mystery that the twentieth century considers typical of Symbolist painting. The figures do not exhibit the idealising sentimentality (or false idealism) that places many Symbolist subjects quite outside everyday reality; in particular, they do not exhibit that mysterious self-evidence, directly addressed to the unconscious of the spectator that had long featured in the work of Moreau, Redon and the pre-Raphaelites. The obscure and mysterious are not essential to the *Vision*; Gauguin came to these barely a month later, in *Fruit (312)*.

A major advance ■ Gauguin himself was aware that he had made a considerable breakthrough. All the same, the *Vision* was not, he felt, a completely successful painting; he described it to Van Gogh as 'very badly made[85]'. Emphasising the experimental aspect of the work, he wrote to Schuffenecker on 8 October: 'This year, I've completely sacrificed execution [and] colour to style, because I wanted to force myself to do something other than what I know I can. It is, I think, a transformation that has not yet borne fruit, but it will[86]'.

He was also aware that he had opened up a very personal vein of creativity. Writing again to Schuffenecker, he noted: 'Of course this symbolic path is full of dangers, and I haven't quite set foot on it yet, but it is fundamentally in my nature and one must always follow one's temperament. I can expect fewer and fewer people to understand me, I know. […] Never mind, whatever happens, I tell you I shall do first class things, I feel it is so and we shall see – You know that in art I'm always right deep-down[87]'.

In the wake of the *Vision*, the Pont-Aven artists painted a few combat scenes: Bernard's *Breton Wrestlers* of 1889 (Luthi 205), Sérusier's *Wrestlers* of 1891, Denis' *Jacob and the Angel* of 1893[88]. Bonnard kept a reproduction of the *Vision* on the wall of his Cannet studio, as Cartier-Bresson's photos, taken in 1946, testify.

Finally, we should note that angels reappear in Gauguin's paintings both Breton and Tahitian. He re-used the two Breton women sitting on the left of the *Vision* in *Yellow Christ* (W327). In *Two Breton Women* of 1894 (W521), a Pont-Avennoise wears the craftswoman's *coiffe*; she is seen from the same angle and is very similar to the woman in the centre here. Thus, although the *Vision* is undoubtedly among the first works made 'from the head' (see *Human Misery*, *317*, inset), a question arises whether the origin of this particular figure is a drawing (now unknown) used for both works.

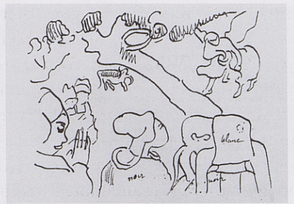
Bernard reports that when Gauguin offered this work to the Nizon church, he 'signed' it in blue on the white frame it then occupied. The signature read: 'Don de Tristan de Moscoso[89]', Gauguin thus identifying himself with a noble Peruvian ancestor, Mariano Eusebio de Tristán y Moscoso (1760-1807), the father of his grandmother, Flora Tristan. Perhaps he thus connected the work with something from a remote hieratic past. (Concerning such white frames, see *Snow*, *98*, inset; the *Vision*'s frame has long since been replaced.)

[1] Bernard, see extracts below, 1903 (D).
[2] Letter to Vincent Van Gogh, 25-27 September 1888 (Merlhès 165); for extracts and a reproduction of the sketch, see D.
[3] The French verb *lutter* can mean 'wrestle', as in the title of *298*, but its general sense is that of 'struggle' [translator's note].
[4] For vivid descriptions of these festivities, see B. Quénec: *Pont-Aven 1800-1914*, [Pont-Aven] 1983, pp. 355-356 and D. Delouche, 1991 (D).
[5] Genesis, 32, 23-31.
[6] Merlhès 165, 25-27 September 1888 (D).
[7] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1880-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 72.
[8] Walter sketchbook, Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des arts graphiques, fonds du Musée d'Orsay, p. 3.
[9] Bernard, 1903 (D).
[10] Thirion, 1956, p. 101, fig. 5, (D); Amishai-Maisels, 1969, fig. 6, (D), and the catalogue of the Saint-Germain-en-Laye exhibition of 1985, p. 46.
[11] Amishai-Maisels, 1969, pp. 28-29 (D).
[12] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 7 or 8 October 1888 (Merlhès 167, D).
[13] Bernard, 1903 (D).
[14] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 28 October 1888 (558).
[15] Merlhès 165, 25-27 September 1888 (D).
[16] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 231; *Avant et après*, p. 62.
[17] Aurier, March 1891 (D).
[18] F. Fénéon: 'VIII[e] exposition impressionniste', *La Vogue*, 13-20 June 1886, in J. Halperin: *Félix Fénéon. Oeuvres plus que complètes*, Geneva, 1970, vol 1, *Chroniques d'Art*, p. 37.
[19] Merlhès 165, 25-27 September 1888 (D).
[20] D. Druick and P. Zegers: *Paul Gauguin, Pages from the Pacific*, catalogue of an exhibition in Auckland, 1995, pp. 16-17.
[21] Amishai-Maisels, 1969, p. 25 (D).
[22] Merlhès 167, 7 or 8 October 1888 (D).
[23] Bernard, 1904 (D).
[24] Bernard, 1904 (D).
[25] Bernard, 1939, p. 9 (D), and 1939-1941, p. 77 (D).
[26] Merlhès 165, 25-27 September 1888 (D).
[27] G. de Maupassant: 'En Bretagne' [dated July 1882], in *Au soleil*, Paris, Ollendorf, 1904, pp. 281-285.
[28] Maupassant [1882], p. 267.
[29] F. Fénéon: 'Autre groupe impressionniste', *La Cravache*, 6 July 1889, p. 1.
[30] Aurier, March 1891 (D).
[31] See especially Bernard, 1895 (D).
[32] Merlhès 165, 25-27 September 1888 (D).
[33] Merlhès 167, 7 or 8 October 1888 (D).
[34] Merlhès 165, 25-27 September 1888 (D).
[35] Chassé, 1921, p. 25 (D).
[36] See Émile Bernard, 1904; other accounts are in the *Souvenirs…*(1939, D) and *L'Aventure de ma vie*, manuscript completed c. 1939-1941 (D).
[37] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 24 May 1885 (Merlhès 78) and Camille Pissarro, and May 85 (Merlhès 79).
[38] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 14 August 1888 (Merlhès 159).
[39] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 24-25 July 1888 (Merlhès 158), quoted in *Fête Gloanec (301)*, paragraph 'Art and abstraction'.
[40] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 23 June 1888 (B8).
[41] B8, 23 June 1888.
[42] B8, 23 June 1888.
[43] B8, 23 June 1888
[44] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 14 August 1888 (Merlhès 159) and 12 September 1888, in Merlhès, *Lettres retrouvées*, 1989 (D).
[45] See Merlhès, 1984, p. 498, note 272 (D).
[46] Vincent Van Gogh: letters B8, B12, B15.
[47] Merlhès, 1989, *Lettres retrouvées*, (D).
[48] Victor Hugo: *Les Misérables*, cited in Merlhès, 1989, *Lettres retrouvées*, pp. 92 and 98 (D).
[49] Merlhès 165, 25-27 September 1888 (D).
[50] V. Hugo: *Les Misérables*, Part 1, Book I, Ch. 13.
[51] P. Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 290.
[52] Bernard, 1919 (D).
[53] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 8 July 1888 (505) and 22 July 1888 (540).
[54] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 23 June 1888 (B8) and 24 June 1888 (B9).
[55] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 4-7 October 1888 (545).
[56] P.-É Colin cited in C. Chassé: *Gauguin et son temps*, Paris, 1955, p. 82.
[57] B8, 23 June 1888.
[58] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 23 July 1888 (B12).
[59] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 12 September 1888, in Merlhès, 1989, *Lettres retrouvées*, pp. 87-89 (D).
[60] V. Merlhès, 1984, p. 501, note 277 (D).
[61] A. de Lamartine: *Nouvelles méditations poétiques*, in V. Merlhès, 1989, p. 91 (D).
[62] Genesis 32, vv. 25-26.
[63] V. Hugo: *Les Misérables*, Part 5, Book VI, Ch. 4.
[64] Merlhès 165, 25-27 September 1888 (D).
[65] For example, Van Gogh, 18 August 1888 (B15), and Gauguin, 12 September 1888, in Merlhès, 1989, *Lettres retrouvées*, p. 89 (D).
[66] G.-A. Aurier, March 1891 (D).
[67] Merlhès 159, 14 August 1888 (D).
[68] P. Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, pp. 290-291.
[69] Merlhès 159, 14 August 1888 (D).
[70] B8, 23 June 1888.
[71] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 12 September 1888, in Merlhès, *Lettres retrouvées*, 1989, p. 87 (D).
[72] B12, 23 July 1888.
[73] Amishai-Maisels, 1969, p. 31 (D).
[74] J. Péladan: Introduction to the catalogue of the Rose+Croix Salon of 1892.
[75] Letter from Vincent Van Gogh to Gauguin, 5-6 November 1888 (559, D).

[76] See D, 1891: Mirbeau, Mallarmé, and above all, Aurier.
[77] Camille to Lucien Pissarro, 20 April 1891 (Bailly-Herzberg 654, D).
[78] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 16 October 1888 (Merlhès 172).
[79] J. Moréas: 'Un manifeste littéraire – Le symbolisme', *Le Figaro littéraire*, 18 September 1886, p. 150.
[80] Gauguin to Fontainas, August 1899 (Malingue CLXXII): this idea was very basic to Gauguin, recurring in *Diverses choses*, p. 275, and *L'Esprit moderne et le catholicisme*, p. 50.
[81] G. Lecomte: 'Évolution idéaliste', *Art et Critique*, 19 March 1892, p. 157.
[82] G.-A. Aurier: 'Les peintres symbolistes', *Oeuvres posthumes*, vol. III, 1893, p. 305.
[83] Malingue CLXXII, August 1899; see paragraph headed 'Methods and space of Symbolism'.
[84] P. Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, pp. 265-268.
[85] Merlhès 165, 25-27 September 1888 (D).
[86] Merlhès 168, 8 October 1888 (D).
[87] Merlhès 172, 16 October 1888.
[88] Reproduced in the catalogue of the *Gauguin* exhibition, Musée départemental du Prieuré de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1985, pp. 48-49.
[89] É. Bernard, 1904, see D for his account; see also 1939, p. 9 and *Aventure de ma vie*, p. 77 (D).

Documents and bibliography:

Letter to Vincent Van Gogh, c. 25-27 September 1888 (Merlhès 165) – illustrated with a sketch:
'At the moment, there's a series* of fine weather which leads us both to try out lots of things. / I've just done a very badly made religious painting which was interesting to do and I like it. I wanted to give it to the Pont-Aven church. Of course, they don't want it.
Breton women pray in a group black costumes very intense – White yellow bonnets very luminous. The two bonnets on the right are like monstrous helmets – An apple tree crosses the canvas dark violet and the foliage drawn in masses like clouds emerald green with green yellow interstices of sun. The ground pure vermilion. In the church it darkens and becomes red-brown.
The angel is clad in violent ultramarine and Jacob in bottle green. The wings of the angel pure chrome 1 – The hair of the angel chrome 2 and the feet and hair orange – I feel that in the figures I have attained a great rustic superstitious simplicity – The whole thing very severe – The cow under the tree is quite small compared to true size and is bucking – For me, in this picture the landscape and the wrestling only exist in the imagination of the people praying after the sermon, which is why there is a contrast between the natural-looking people and the combat in its unnatural and disproportionate landscape'.
Letter to Theo Van Gogh, 7 or 8 October 1888 (Merlhès 167):
'Bernard's mother is going to Paris one of these days and will bring you a few pictures by me – Bernard will bring the rest next month. The church picture will be handed over and you can show it – Unfortunately it's done for a church and what's right there doesn't have the same effect in those surroundings of stained-glass, stone, etc as in a *salon*. Anyway the style is the same'.
Letter to Émile Schuffenecker, 8 October 1888 (Merlhès 168): 'I did a painting for a church of



Sketch in the letter to Vincent Van Gogh, 25-27 September 1888 (Merlhès 165). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

course it was refused so I'm sending it to Van Gog*. No use describing it you'll see it. This year I've sacrificed everything…' See above under 'A major advance'.
Letter to Theo Van Gogh, 27 October 1888 (Merlhès 175):
'I hope you'll like the pictures from Pont-Aven, the most important one will come with Bernard – Perhaps some are not very finished but I think all the same that they're very carefully thought out and just as I wanted them. Whether they're saleable I don't know'.
Letter from Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 5-6 November 1888, (559): 'Gauguin is very happy that you like his consignment from Brittany and that others who have seen them like them too'.
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huygue 1952), pp. 72-73: preparatory lists for the exhibition of les XX: p. 72, first list: *'[no.] 30 [canvas] Apparition'*; p. 73, definitive list: *'[no.] 7 Vision du Sermon 1000 [FF]'*.
List sent by Gauguin to O. Maus in late 1888, indicating the latest prices for the works to be exhibited in Brussels in February 1889 (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): Gauguin wants FF 1,000 for this painting, a price equal to that of *The Heat of the Day (320)* but lower than *Human Misery (317)*.
O. Maus: 'Le Salon des XX à Bruxelles', *La Cravache*, 2 March 1889, p. 1: 'The incessant buzz of human stupidity' rises to 'peals of laughter' before paintings like the *Vision*, but Maus protests 'his sincere admiration for Monsieur Gauguin […] The primitive quality of his paintings attracts me, as does the charm of his harmonies'.
Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): among the no. 30 canvases, 'Praying Women and Wrestling Angels [valued at FF] 600'.
Letter from O. Mirbeau to C. Monet, 22 January 1891 (O. Mirbeau: *Correspondance avec Cl. Monet*, presentée par P. Michel et J.-F. Nivet, Tusson, 1990, p. 49): 'Gauguin came to see me. He's a likeable character and absolutely tormented by the suffering of art. And he has a fine head. I liked him a lot. It's not difficult to find a very interesting cerebral side to this apparently rather rough character. He was very anxious to know what you think of his evolution toward complication of the idea combined with simplification of form. I told him you had greatly like the Jacob and the Angel and his pottery. It was the right thing to do, he was very pleased'.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Letter from S. Mallarmé to O. Mirbeau, 23 February 1891 (S. Mallarmé: *Correspondance*, présentée par H. Mondor et L.J. Austin, Paris, 1959-1985, vol. IV, p. 201, no. MLXV):
'Dear friend, I have just left the Hôtel des Ventes: it was very satisfying. The pictures sold, on average, for 250 to 400 and some (including Jacob and the Angel, 900) went for more than that'.
G.-A. Aurier: 'Symbolism in Painting', *Mercure de France*, March 1891, pp. 155-165: Aurier cites Swedenborg: 'This very night, the eyes of my inner man were opened: they were made such as to look into the heavens, into the world of ideas and into hell'. He adds: 'Paul Gauguin seems to me one of these sublime seers' giving his own interpretation of the *Vision*: '[…] this wonderful picture by Paul Gauguin, which truly illuminates the enigma of the Poem, during the paradisiacal hours of primitive humanity; which reveals the ineffable charms of Dream and Mystery, and of the symbolic veils that only the hands of the simple [can] partly lift; which, for a good reader, solves the eternal psychological problem of the possibility of religion and political and sociological theories; which finally displays the wild primordial beast tamed by the magical philtres of the Chimaera'. Aurier concludes: 'today when, in literature – the fact is increasingly clear – we are witnessing the death of naturalism, when we perceive the imminence of an idealist and even mystical reaction, it would be astonishing if the fine arts showed no similar tendencies. Jacob and the Angel […] is, in my view, sufficient evidence that this tendency exists' (pp. 156 and 158). The date '9 February 1891' stands at the end of the text.
'Petite Chronique', *L'Art moderne*, Brussels, 8 March 1891, p. 81: '[…] this extraordinary and suggestive painting, glimpsed at the [exhibition of] les XX in 1889, […] raised 900 francs at auction'.
Letter from Camille to Lucien Pissarro, 20 April 1891 (Bailly-Herzberg 654): 'I've nothing against Gauguin painting a vermilion background, nor two warriors wrestling and Breton peasant women in the foreground, what I hold against him is that he swiped all that from the Japanese and from Byzantine painters and others; the reproach is that he doesn't apply his synthesis to our modern philosophy, which is absolutely social, anti-authoritarian and anti-mystic […] It's a step back'. Pissarro developed this idea in his letter to Lucien of 13 May 1891 (Bailly-Herzberg 661).
G.-A. Aurier: 'Paul Gauguin', *La Vie moderne*, 24 May 1891, p. 97.

G.-A. Aurier: 'Néo-Traditionnistes-Paul Gauguin', *La Plume* (supplement), 1 September 1891, p. 300.
C. Mauclair: 'Albert Besnard et le symbolisme concret', *Revue indépendante*, October 1891, pp. 17-18: 'I should certainly refuse to class *Jacob and the Angel* as symbolic; the idea of it is wrong […] pictorial pseudo-symbolism.'
C. Merki: 'Apologie pour la peinture', *Mercure de France,* June 1893, p. 149: review of the Salon des Indépendants, in which the *Vision* seems to have appeared, in a room reserved for artists who had enjoyed the patronage of Le Barc de Boutteville. Having criticised Gauguin's outrageous colours, the '"plate of spinach", bad draughtsmanship and grand ideas', Merki added: 'What one can say today of his *Jacob and the Angel* is that, if Jacob and the angel have been deformed by the brains of the Breton women, the Breton women have been similarly deformed by the brain of the painter, since they have turned out just as badly as the rest'.
É. Bernard: 'Lettre ouverte a M. Camille Mauclair', *Mercure de France*, June 1895, pp. 333-334: Bernard gives an account of his own role in Gauguin's artistic development and critical reception: 'during my stay in Pont-Aven, Paul Gauguin's style changed completely [;] from very dull, muted, characterless paintings he went overnight to a 'vision', the 'vision of the Sermon' and other paintings of that kind. / […] Aurier made my acquaintance in Saint-Briac in 1888, while Paul Gauguin was at Pont-Aven […] A year later I introduced Aurier to Gauguin. […] when I met the poet Albert Aurier, he knew nothing at all about this artistic movement […] he wrote his article in the Mercure after we had talked about it a great deal. This is the truth as it should be told'.
C. Morice: 'Paul Gauguin', *Les Hommes d'aujourd'hui*, [1896-January 1897 at the latest], vol. 9, no. 440, no page number.
C. Morice: 'Paul Gauguin', *Mercure de France,* October 1903, p. 125.
A. de la Rochefoucauld, in 'Quelques opinions sur Paul Gauguin', interviews by C. Morice, *Mercure de France*, November 1903, p. 422.
É. Bernard: 'Notes sur l'école dite de "Pont-Aven"', *Mercure de France*, December 1903, pp. 679-680: Bernard says that, when he arrived at Pont-Aven, he noted in Gauguin's work 'the same interweaving of colours, the studied division of tones as in the impressionists; a better style was appearing, rendering form and composition more aristocratic, but still humble. I took him to my house, and, to my great surprise, he was filled with enthusiasm'. (See 'Like Bernard: Stylisation' for the lines that follow these.)
É. Bernard: 'Concernant Paul Gauguin', *Nouvelle revue d'Égypte*, January 1904, pp. 9-10: 'When the painting was finished, it occurred to him to give it to a church, whence the title. Don't get the idea that this was some pious sentiment; think of it rather as a confrontation. Not far from Pont-Aven, there was a little church, very old, in whose graveyard we often went to see an old stone Calvary (this Calvary played a major aesthetic role in the art of Gauguin). […] The church, in fact, was every bit as fine as the Calvary, with its Romanesque arches, austere and granite-built, […and] heavy feudal aspect, inhabited by grotesque saints, carved directly into the wood and daubed with ochre; bizarre monsters were incised in the beams that held up its tottering roof. Gauguin wanted to hang this very simplistic, slightly grotesque and naïve painting among these objects. So he signed it, adding in blue, on the frame 'Don de Tristan de Moscoso'; consequently, that day, I heard the history of the generations of the Gauguins […] [Gauguin, Laval and Bernard go to Nizon.] Gauguin himself looked around to see where he would put the work, and pointed the place out: there, above this little entrance doorway, on a background of bare stone. We lifted it up (Laval was very, very tall); Gauguin agreed. Now we needed the curate's permission. […] The first words that he uttered announced a polite refusal. Gauguin argued with him, invoking the old saints, the old church, the potential harmony with this art […] The priest questioned him on the subject, and declared the interpretation non-religious. If the famous struggle had at least been clearly shown! But these enormous bonnets, these peasant-women's backs filling up the picture, and the whole point of the thing reduced to such insignificant proportions in the distance!! […] Mortified, we carried the painting back to Pont-Aven, for the greater glory of Gauguin [as it happened], because it was this painting that did most, in Paris, to repute him the creator of symbolism'.
J. de Rotonchamp: *Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1906, reprinted 1925, p. 88: 'Bravos rang out when the main piece in the [1891] sale – *The Vision after the Sermon* – was knocked down to Henry Meilheurat des Pruraux'.
Vollard Archives, 1910 diary, Tuesday 15 February: 'Bought from Madame Meiheurat des Prureaux […] Jacob and the Angel 6,000F (paid)'.
Vollard Archives, 1911 diary, Friday 17 November: 'Handed over to Mr Dollfuss [illegible] of London […] Gauguin Jacob and Angel [priced at FF] 18,000'.
Vollard Archives, letter from A. Vollard to John Nevill, Stafford Galleries, dated 1 February 1912: 'Considering your exhibition closed a month ago, I am astonished not yet to have received the price of my Gauguin painting "Jacob and the Angel", i.e. fifteen thousand francs. […] I am given to understand that Mr. Sadler bought the picture. If you are anxious not to bother him, I can write myself'. Two letters from Vollard of 9 February 1912 return to this subject.
Vollard Archives, 1912 diary, Monday 11 March, 'Nevill 15,000 fr cheque received in payment of the painting by Gauguin Jacob and the Angel'.
É. Bernard: 'Mémoire pour l'histoire du symbolisme pictural en 1890', *Maintenant*, no. 3, 1919 (reprinted in *Arts-Documents*, January 1953, p. 7): Bernard found it 'quite strange' that Gauguin, who was, in his view, 'anti-Christian' should have chosen a religious subject for the *Vision*, but explains 'he was also struck by my Catholic mysticism'.
C. Chassé: *Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven*, Paris, 1921, p. 25: 'Then we left for Nizon, carrying the painting that we wanted to give to the priest of that parish, Monsieur Sérusier told me, but he knew that Gauguin had already met with a refusal at Pont-Aven; and he, too, refused'; see also pp. 66-67.
É. Bernard: *L'Aventure de ma vie*, manuscript finished c. 1939-1941, in the collection of the Bibliothèque du Louvre, pp. 76-78.
É. Bernard: *Souvenirs inédits sur l'artiste Paul Gauguin…*, fascicule collecting a series of articles that had appeared separately in 1939, Lorient, no date, pp. 9-10.
H. Dorra: 'Émile Bernard and Paul Gauguin', *GBA*, April 1955, pp. 235, 240, 257.
Y. Thirion: 'L'influence de l'estampe japonaise dans l'œuvre de Gauguin', *GBA*, special Gauguin number, January-April 1956, published 1958, pp. 101, 104.
Wildenstein 1964, no. 245 (repr.).
Z. Amishai-Maisels: *Gauguin's Religious Themes* (doctoral thesis, Hebrew University, 1969), republished 1985, pp. 18-32.
J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and the Impressionists', *GBA*, January-February 1973, pp. 49, 78.
V. Jirat-Wasiutynski: *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism*, (doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1975), microfilm version, 1993, pp. 147-154, 263, 281-285, 353-354, 375.
K. Berger: *Japonismus…*, 1980, English edition 1992, pp. 147-151.
V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, pp. 500-501 (on the various meanings of the theme of Jacob and the angel).
K. Varnedoe: 'Gauguin', in the catalogue of *Primitivism in 20th Century Art*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1984, pp. 182-185, and notes pp. 205-206.
V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Tahiti, 1989, pp. 90-98 (in particular on the possible influence on Gauguin of Hugo's *Les Misérables*).
V. Jirat-Wasiutynski and T. Newton: 'Tradition et innovation…', in *Actes du colloque Gauguin […] 1989*, Paris, 1991, pp. 70-72; the authors point out that Gauguin used wax to bind his colours (but according to the National Gallery of Scotland, the 'waxy' look of certain surfaces is a result of brush strokes melting from the heat when the painting was remounted).
D. Delouche: 'Gauguin et le thème de la lutte', in *Actes du colloque Gauguin […] 1989*, Paris, 1991, pp. 157-171.

Exhibitions:

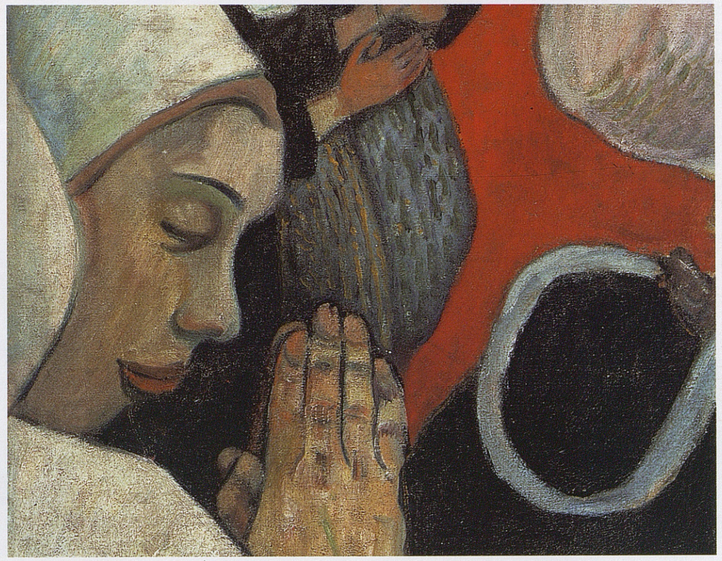
6e exposition des XX, Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, February 1889, no. 7 (*Vision of the Sermon*).
Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.

Probably: *Salon des indépendants*, Paris, April 1893; see review by C. Melki, **D** above.
Paris, Vollard, 1904, no. 1.
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1906, no. 209 (*Jacob and the Angel*).
Gauguin and Cézanne, London, Stafford Gallery, 1911, no. 12.
London, Leicester Galleries, 1924, no. 51.
Paris, Orangerie, 1949, no. 6.
Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-1950, no. 19.
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 8.
Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy of Arts, and London, Tate Gallery, 1955, no. 23.
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental du Prieuré, 1985, no. 73.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 50 (exhibited only in Paris).
Gauguin and the School of Pont-Aven, London, Royal Academy of Arts, and Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, 1989-1990, no. G, supp. 5.

Provenance:

Brought from Brittany by É. Bernard in late October-early November 1888 (see Merlhès 175 and Van Gogh letter 559, **D** above) and deposited with Boussod et Valadon.
Gauguin Sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, catalogue no. 25, auctioneer's book no. 6 ('*Vision after the Sermon*, 900 f to M. Des Pruraux, 49 bd. Montparnasse').
Henri Meilheurat des Pruraux, Paris.
Bought from Mme Meilheurat des Pruraux by Ambroise Vollard 15 February 1910 for FF 6,000; see Vollard diary entry, **D** above.
Bought from Vollard in early 1912 by Sir Michael Sadler (via the Stafford Galleries, and perhaps Druet); Vollard was paid FF 15,000 – see Vollard Archives 1911-1912, **D** above.
Bought in 1925:
Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland-1643.







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309
Self-Portrait (Les Misérables)

Canvas. 0.45 × 0.55
Signed, dated, annotated and dedicated lower right: *les misérables / à l'ami Vincent / P Gauguin 88*
W239

This work was painted during the last few days of September 1888, and both Gauguin's intentions and the circumstances of its execution are well known to us thanks to the many surviving letters (see **D**). The powerful stimulus afforded by the Gauguin-Van Gogh-Bernard correspondence proved decisive in this work, which is, in its own way, a response to a desire expressed by Van Gogh around 11 September. Vincent told Theo Van Gogh: 'My letter to Gauguin has gone, I asked them for an exchange if they are willing, I should so like to have Gauguin's portrait of Bernard and Bernard's portrait of Gauguin here[1]'.

Fraternal exchanges ■ Van Gogh dreamed of alleviating his solitude by circulating works in this way: 'For a long time, I've been touched by the fact that the Japanese artists very often exchanged works with one another. It shows that they loved and supported each other, and that a degree of harmony prevailed among them; that they lived precisely a sort of fraternal life, naturally, and without intrigue. The more like them we are in that respect, the better we'll feel[2]'.
And throughout that summer, in the correspondence between the solitary Van Gogh in Arles and the little Pont-Aven group, a spirit of collaboration and fraternity makes itself felt. It was, indeed, a community spirit, which received expression in the plan to found a collective studio in Arles of which Gauguin would be the 'abbot'[3]. Vincent felt that, in order to seal their common friendship, many portraits should be painted within the group, and many pictures exchanged[4].



O. Redon: *Émile Bernard, Profile*, drawing, 1901. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



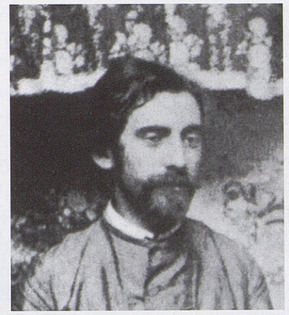
V. Van Gogh: *Self-Portrait for Laval* (F501). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art.

The result was a 'family' of portraits. This includes Bernard's self-portrait (Luthi 133), which was intended to match Gauguin's; it and Laval's (reproduced at *238*) were both presented to Vincent Van Gogh, and form part of the collection of the Van Gogh Museum. Van Gogh, in turn, exchanged three self-portraits, one with Gauguin (the self-portrait as Buddhist monk, F476), one with Laval (F501) and one, somewhat earlier, with Bernard (F526). Gauguin, for his part, presented his *Self-Portrait (291)* to Laval. And though Van Gogh never realised the dream, expressed in his letter of 18-24 September[5], of painting Gauguin and Bernard, he was at least able to pose for Gauguin (see *326*).

Hesitation ■ On 25 September, the picture had not even been conceived in its current form, let alone begun, as we know from a letter of that date[6]; it was finished a week later, on 1 October[7]. Gauguin judged it 'very hasty'[8]; it had been painted expressly for Van Gogh, 'swap or no swap' and was 'not for SALE'[9].
But Bernard and Gauguin never managed to paint each other's portraits. Though Gauguin made much of Bernard's powers of innovation, Bernard felt 'too shy' to portray his elder. He lacked the courage to express himself under these circumstances: 'he finds [Gauguin] such a great artist that he's almost afraid of him and finds everything that he, Bernard, does bad in comparison with Gauguin', as Van Gogh put it[10]. And Gauguin, though he was 'observing young Bernard', felt that 'he didn't yet have him off pat'[11]. This was understandable: prior to Bernard's arrival in Pont-Aven, a mere month and a half before, they had never been close, and the winter before 'Bernard was still trying to pick a quarrel with Gauguin[12]'.
Thus a fortnight had gone by since Van Gogh's request, and nothing had yet been done. At which point, a solution was found; each agreed to include an image of the other in the background of a self-portrait.
And in each case, that image was very simplified. In his profile of Bernard, Gauguin does not display all the intuition and subtlety of which he was capable. The general layout of the picture seems to suggest the collaboration between the two men, each-half turned toward the other and united by the 'V' formed by the line of their clothing. Does it also reflect the power relations between the charismatic Gauguin and Bernard, who saw in him 'a great master and a man absolutely superior in point of char-



É. Bernard: *Self-Portrait* (Luthi 133). Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).



Émile Bernard, detail of the photo reproduced on page 450. Photo: Émile Bernard Archives.

Ancient or Islamic Persian?

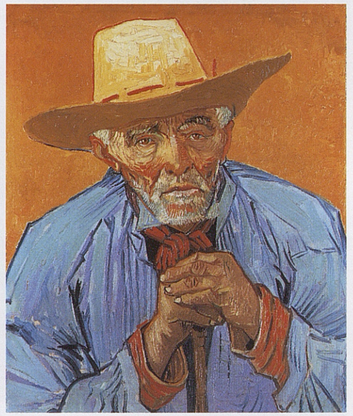
Commenting on Gauguin's letter about his self-portrait[1], Van Gogh told his brother 'As to what Gauguin says about "Persian" [*Persan*] it's true. I don't think it would shock people if it was in the Musée Dieulafoy, it would be quite proper to put it there[2]'. Thus Van Gogh had no hesitation in imagining this portrait in the recently inaugurated room of the Louvre where Elamite and ancient Persian Achaemenian art (from the excavations at Susa) was exhibited.
Neither Gauguin nor Van Gogh could have seen the salle Dieulafoy, which had been opened in June 1888 during their absence. But Van Gogh can hardly have believed that it was given over to the exhibition of woven artefacts; he probably failed to read the word 'carpet' and was primarily struck by 'Persian'. The distinction in French between 'Perse' (pre-Islamic Persian) and 'Persan' (Islamic Persian) was, perhaps, not so rigorously observed at the time as it now is. The chronology of the art of that region had yet to be firmly established, and the preface to the catalogue of the recent Museums of the Trocadéro, whose Persian section exhibited both ancient and Islamic works, confessed that the dating of certain objects remained uncertain[3].
We have no proof that ancient Persian art had any specific influence on the 1888 experiments of the young artists, and for Van Gogh, at any rate, it was of secondary importance: 'I prefer the Greeks and Japanese to the Persians and Egyptians', he declared[4].
But this throwaway remark nevertheless indicates an interest, and may suggest that ancient Middle Eastern and Egyptian art (which had by then been present in Parisian museums for several decades) was playing a part in the changing tastes of the time; for those who sought new systems in foreign parts (see *Vision, 308*, inset on 'Other Civilisations'), they constituted a further – stimulating – point of reference for the 'primitive'.
When Gauguin returned to Paris, the following year, he did, of course, go and see the salle Dieulafoy. His 1889 article on this stylised form of art contains clear echoes of his reference to the Persian qualities of his self-portrait: 'it required immense genius to imagine flowers as animal muscles and muscles that are flowers. The whole mystic, dreaming Orient is to be found there[5]', he added, thus further emphasising the extent to which Synthetist 'abstraction' derives from a primitivist outlook of mystic kind (see *Vision, 308,* inset on Synthetism, 'The Heart of Synthetism').

[1] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 1 October 1888 (Merlhès 166, **D**), cited above.
[2] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3 October 1888 (544, **D**).
[3] E. Soldi: *Les Arts méconnus. Les nouveaux Musées du Trocadéro*, Paris, 1881, p. 240.
[4] 544, 3 October 1888 (**D**).
[5] Paul Gauguin: 'Notes sur l'art à l'exposition universelle', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 4 Juillet 1889, p. 86.

acter and intelligence?[13]' They were now working together as closely as they ever would, and even so, it seems that something prevented them from being completely open with each other. The following year saw them move increasingly further apart.

An 'Abstract' and 'Symbolic' Art

'I feel a need to explain what I was trying to do', Gauguin told Van Gogh when the work was finished[14]. He repeated these explanations in very similar terms in his letter to Schuffenecker of 8 October[15], but even so, not all of them are completely perspicuous.
From the start, Gauguin planned something quite unlike the traditional portrait: 'it's not a copy of a face that you want but a portrait as I understand the word […]. I may do it from memory but in any case it will be an abstraction[16]'.
And he deemed the finished product 'so abstract' that it was 'absolutely incomprehensible […] the drawing is really very special (complete abstraction). The eyes the mouth the nose are like flowers in a Persian carpet personifying the symbolic aspect too', he told Schuffenecker[17]. Cryptic as this seems, it was what he meant, since he had just told Van Gogh that 'the drawing of the eyes and the nose like flowers in Persian carpets epitomises an abstract and symbolic art[18]'.
The 'abstraction' to which Gauguin so emphatically refers is that of Synthetism (See *Vision, 308*, inset on 'Synthetism'). Here it takes the form of a decorative surface divided into large areas bordered by arabesques; the outlines are heavily delineated, and the colours and zones of shadow are exaggerated.
The very unexpected reference to Persian carpets confirms Gauguin's interest in this decorative, 'primitive' and schematic art (see *Blue Trees, 319*, inset on carpets), though it was given a slightly different interpretation by Van Gogh (see inset 'Ancient or Islamic Persian?').
But this art is not merely 'abstract', it is also 'symbolic'. Gauguin shows an increasingly conscious tendency to freight his new methods with meaning.
Thus, if the tortured draughtsmanship of the eyes conceals a flower, it does so in order to highlight the contrast between it and the childish bouquets of the background, accentuating the dichotomy that is, as we shall see, the real subject of this portrait. We should note in passing that the cheerful floral arrangements of the wallpaper are a variation of increasingly significant kind played upon a form of evocative background that Gauguin had been using since 1884 (see still life *144*).
If the colours are 'rather remote from nature[19]', it is because they evoke the blood and fire that 'symbolise' the nature of the model: 'the reds, the violets scored with gleams of fire like the glow of a furnace in the eyes, which are the seat of the painter's struggling thoughts[20]'. 'The hot sexual blood floods the face while the furnace-like colours enveloping the eyes suggest the fire that burns molten in the souls of painters like ourselves[21]'.



V. Van Gogh: *Patience Escalier*, late August 1888 (F444). Collection and photo: Stavros S. Niarchos.

This cannot help but remind us of Van Gogh; of the first portrait of Patience Escalier (F443), whom Van Gogh had described on 11 August as 'this terrible man I had to paint in the furnace heat of harvest-time', with his 'flaring orange-tones like red-hot iron'[22]. That letter was written to his brother Theo, though we know that he also wrote to Gauguin on 13 or 14 August, perhaps in similar terms[23]. Certainly Gauguin read Van Gogh's letter to Bernard of 18 August: 'his colour is suggestive of the red-hot air of the harvest in the deep south, in the middle of the dog days[24]'. The two artists were hundreds of kilometres apart, yet there is an astonishing resemblance between these faces, that of Gauguin incised in red and blue, that of Escalier scored with the red, orange, black and white of Van Gogh's portraits (F443 and F444). Both of the Escalier portraits were painted in August, thus slightly before the Gauguin self-portrait. There can be no doubt that Gauguin was here using the exaggerated, expressive, 'suggestive' and 'symbolic' colour of which Van Gogh had spoken (see inset on colour).

Symbolic complementaries ■ The Prussian blue contrasting with a yellow-orange background seems to show Gauguin applying Van Gogh's ideas about complementaries (see *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset on complementaries), and almost exactly reverses the arrangement of colours in Van Gogh's portrait of Boch (F462). Like Van Gogh, Gauguin has divided the surface 'symbolically' into two zones contrasting light and shadow, but in Gauguin's painting the shadow is within the man. And, as in the Hugo novel cited next to the signature, dark here challenges light.

A Considerable Personage

Gauguin's self-portrait – as dramatically sculpted as Bernard's is flat and naïve – was not intended simply to express his own powerful nature. He also sought to associate it with a mythical figure already fraught with significance. This was a time when the notion of the portrait was developing and becoming something more ambitious; in particular, Van Gogh wished to show his models in an ideal light, to impart to them some reference to the absolute, and had perhaps said this to Gauguin (see inset 'Symbolist portrait').
As Merlhès points out[25], one of Gauguin's letters shows that that he was already reading *Les Misérables* in early July. Some years earlier, Van Gogh had been struck by the metaphysical aspect of Hugo's novel, finding it in confirmation of 'love of one's fellow man, of faith, of the awareness that something lofty exists, in short of this "something from above"[26]'. Gauguin was profoundly moved by the inspiration and subject of *Les Misérables* (see *Vision, 308*, 'The great awakening'), and it occurred to him to take on the identity of Hugo's hero.

A man divided ■ Is it Gauguin who resembles Jean Valjean or Jean Valjean who resembles Gauguin in this portrait? There is clearly no lack of conviction in Gauguin's identification with a misunderstood man of great physical and moral power, who lived a solitary life full of suffering and emotional deprivation; but this is no less true of Valjean's spiritual endeavours, those of a man divided as it is the nature of mankind to be divided, doomed to unrelenting struggle with the toils of Evil, and embodying the ascent toward sainthood.
There is certainly more than a little of Gauguin in this 'mask' of a 'powerful shoddily-dressed bandit' who hides 'his inner

'Symbolic' Colour, 'Suggestive' Colour

The subject of 'a language symbolic through colour itself' was probably first mentioned by Van Gogh in June[1]. When, in August, he returned to the topic of the 'arbitrary' anti-Naturalistic colour displayed in his *Sower* of June 1888 (see *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset on colour), he went further: 'I make more arbitrary use of colour to express myself powerfully'. He also explained why, in his projected portrait of Eugène Boch (F462, not painted till early September), he wanted to exaggerate the yellow-gold of Boch's hair[2] and contrast it with a 'rich blue background' in order to evoke 'the mysterious brilliance of a pale star in the infinite'. Soon he was saying that he wanted 'to express the feelings of two lovers by the marriage of two complementaries, by their contrasts and commminglings, and the mysterious vibration of juxtaposed tones. Express the thought in a forehead by the radiance of a bright colour on a dark background. / […] The ardour of a character by the radiance of a setting sun[3]'. These two letters came shortly before a number of letters to Gauguin now lost but which may have dealt with similar themes.
Van Gogh then began to speak of 'suggestive colour', first to Bernard on 18 August[4], and then to Gauguin in a lost letter dated 4-7 September[5]. Gauguin replied immediately, taking up this expression: 'Yes you're right to want painting with a coloration suggestive of poetic ideas'.
'In this matter', Gauguin went on, 'I agree but with a difference. I know nothing of poetic ideas probably it's a sense I lack. I find everything poetic and it's in the sometimes mysterious corners of my heart that I glimpse poetry. Forms and colours harmoniously managed spontaneously produce poetry […] No need to cavil about this; we can talk about it at length[6]'. These points of view are not so very divergent, though, in practice; evocative colour tends rather toward the poetic in Gauguin and toward the passionate in Van Gogh.

There are several ways in which colour can have powers of suggestion. One is by reference to the natural world: blue symbolising the nocturnal infinite, yellow the torrid days of summer, and so on. But another requires no intermediary ideas or images, and allows colour to act through its own intrinsic power. Van Gogh said of his *Night Café*: 'I tried to use red and green to express these terrible human passions […] It's […] a colour suggestive of some emotion or other, of an ardent temperament[7]'. These notions are not without relation to Baudelairian 'correspondences' and 'formal symbolism' as it was then called (see *Vision, 308*, inset on Synthetism, 'Synthetism and Symbolism confused', and *Fruit, 312*, inset on 'A "Symbolic" Language of Form').

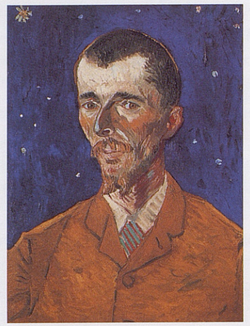
Van Gogh and Gauguin were both intensively sensitive to the suggestive powers of colour, and soon afterwards set out in a new direction, that of the exaltation of colour through new harmonies: see *Blue Trees, 319*, inset.

[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 26 June 1888 (503).
[2] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 11 August 1888 (520).
[3] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3 September 1888 (531).
[4] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 18 August 1888 (B15), cited above under 'An "Abstract" and "Symbolic" Art'.
[5] Vincent Van Gogh to Gauguin, 4-7 September 1888 (Merlhès LXVI).
[6] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 7-9 September 1888 (Merlhès 163).
[7] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 8 September 1888 (533).

Symbolist Portrait

Bernard later wrote about the art of portraiture and 'the ideas we then held about character', with reference, it seems, to the discussions of that summer[1]. These ideas turned on ways of foregrounding the significant and essential traits of the model (the word 'character' comes from Dujardin's 'manifesto' cited in the introduction to the second part of Gauguin's Pont-Aven campaign). Van Gogh went further, aspiring to truths through which the ideal could transpire. 'In a picture', he wrote, 'I should like to say something as consoling as a piece of music. I should like to paint men and women with that tincture of the eternal once symbolised by the halo, and which we seek [to convey] through sheer radiance, by the reverberation of our colours. / […] To express hope by some star or other. A man's ardent nature by a radiance like that of the sunset. This is certainly not realist *trompe-l'oeil*, but is not something that really and truly exists?[2]'

On the basis of these ideas, he painted two portraits that are indeed almost haloed. The first of these, on 2 September, was that of the painter Eugène Boch as the incarnation of 'the poet' (F462, first conceived in August), and the second, at some point before 16 September, his own self-portrait 'as Buddhist monk' (F476), which he later sent to Gauguin. Surely he would have spoken of these aspirations, and of the 'poet' portrait, in the now lost letter he wrote to Gauguin between 4 and 7 September?[3]



V. Van Gogh: *Portrait of Eugène Boch* (F462). Conceived in August, painted around 2 September 1888. Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

At all events, after the astounding portrait of *Clovis (208)*, which Gauguin had so precociously invested with 'mystery', after the *Portrait of Madeleine Bernard (305)* with its precise but discreet allusions, this self-portrait is the first of Gauguin's portraits that (as Van Gogh had put it) systematically 'aggrandizes the personality' of the sitter[4].

[1] É. Bernard: *Souvenirs inédits sur l'artiste peintre Paul Gauguin…*, Lorient, no date, p. 11.
[2] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3 September 1888 (531).
[3] Vincent Van Gogh to Gauguin, 4-7 September 1888 (Merlès LXVI, lost).
[4] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 4-7 October 1888 (545, **D**).

sweetness and nobility'[27]. Gauguin said of himself 'there are two natures in me, the Indian and the sensitive – The latter has disappeared, allowing the Indian to march resolutely on[28]'. This dichotomy no doubt explains the ambivalent gaze: one eye exudes anguish and aggression, while the other – less easy to read – suggests sadness and profound lucidity, perhaps, or even a certain compassion.



Jean Valjean, illustration from Victor Hugo: *Les Misérables* [1879-1882], p. 101. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Solitary, savage, outlaw ■ But 'at first glance', as Gauguin noted[29], the Jean Valjean depicted here has little in common with the redeemed hero of the novel's conclusion. He is more like the malefactor of the opening chapters, his hair cut 'short yet standing up on his head', a 'wild, anxious gleam in his eye', and his 'savage face' tinged with a 'ruddy gleam' (Merlhès cites a number of descriptions from *Les Misérables* that bring this portrait to mind)[30]. He is the convict on whom society has inflicted suffering so intolerable as to reduce him to the state of 'wild beast'.

This identification with an outlaw doubtless appealed to Gauguin; soon afterwards, he told Colin how much he admired Balzac's Vautrin, another convict on the run[31]. At this stage, he prided himself more on his 'savagery' (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset on this term, and *Fruit, 312*) than on being an upright citizen. The scion of a libertarian, republican and even socialist family, he liked to do battle with the prevailing order. He was confident of his strengths and intuitions, and felt ever more justified in taking up a destructive attitude, willingly appearing more surly than he was; aggression was more truthful – and undoubtedly more stylish and bracing – than sensitivity.

The crucified painter ■ But 'this Jean Valjean oppressed and outlawed by society,



Sketch in the letter to Schuffenecker of 8 October 1888 (Merlhès 168).

with all his love and strength' at the same time offered 'the image of an Impressionist of our day'[32]; he was the misunderstood artist, abandoned to the 'fire that burns molten in the souls of painters like ourselves[33]'. And his feverish and tortured expression emerges to superlative effect in a sketch after the painting included in Gauguin's letter of 8 October[34]. This 'Impressionist painter, disreputable and always bearing a chain on the world's behalf[35]' was doomed to a life of suffering; beneath 'my features you have my personal image and a portrait of each and every one of us, victims of society who are revenged on it by doing good', Gauguin

noted. And he adds: 'Outside my art what a filthy life, and was it really worth Jesus dying for all these rotten puppets. / As an artist, yes, as a reformer I think not[36]'.
The last sentence is somewhat surprising; in fact, it echoes an inspired letter from Van Gogh, in which he describes Christ as 'as an artist greater than any[37]'. The letter (for extracts, see *Vision, 308*, 'Van Gogh and the Artist-Christ') made a considerable impression on Gauguin.
The figure of Christ was thus beginning to mean something to Gauguin, if only because he connected it with that of the artist and the latter's quasi-sacerdotal role (see *Vision, 308*, inset 'The Religious Function of the Artist') and life of affliction. Van Gogh's letter presided over the birth of an idea which, the following year, came to fruition in *Christ on the Mount of Olives* (W326). The comparison Gauguin makes here between the artist and Jean Valjean, a martyred figure moving steadily toward complete self-renunciation, was, as Amishai-Maisels observes, the first step toward identifying the artist with Christ[38].
The image of the martyred artist dates from the Romantic epoch, but it was based on practical realities the full weight of which was felt in the painters' everyday lives: incomprehension, of which Gauguin had long complained ('every door closed to us. It must be said that we are the martyrs of painting')[39]; the 'poverty and social isolation' from which Van Gogh too suffered[40]; and destabilising solitude ('Living on our own, as both of us do, we live like madmen or malefactors, at least as far as appearances go, and in reality too a bit')[41]. This frustration and emotional deprivation were soon to be given a particularly vivid description in a

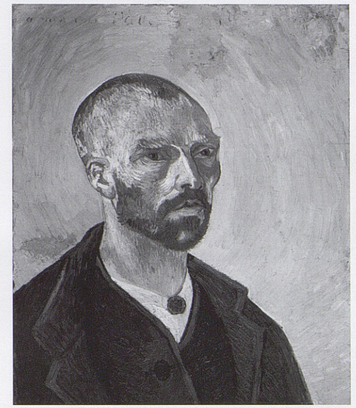


Vase given to Madeleine Bernard (Gray 66). Paris, Musée d'Orsay. Dépôt du Département des objets d'art du Musée du Louvre (Jean Schmidt donation). Photo: RMN.

series of letters that Gauguin wrote to Bernard around November 1889: 'this isolation, this concentration on oneself, above all at times when all the main joys of life are outside oneself, and when there is a complete lack of intimate satisfaction, a crying hunger as it were like an empty stomach, in the long run this isolation is a trap as far as happiness is concerned, unless one is made of ice and absolutely insensible. Despite my best efforts to make myself so, I'm not, my original nature incessantly returns. Like the Gauguin of the pot, one hand stifling in the furnace the scream that is forcing its way out[42]'. The artist gives his life as Christ gave his.

Not forgetting Madeleine ■ This slightly later passage is cited here because the state of mind that it describes seems completely at one with that in which the self-portrait was painted; by then, moreover, the 'furnace' had inspired another self-portrait, the pot to which Gauguin refers (it is, we believe, subsequent to the letter of 8 October 1888[43], in which case the allusion in that letter to 'pottery gnarled in the great fire' is a generalisation.) Now, the pot referred to in the 1889 letter is generally identified with Gray 66, which Gauguin had presented to Madeleine Bernard.
And Madeleine Bernard is surely not irrelevant to the suffering expressed in the present work (see her portrait, *305*). The wallpaper background, belonging, in Gauguin's words, to 'the bedroom of a pure young girl[44]', is supposed to attest to 'artistic virginity[45]', but behind this reference is a further allusion to a 'virginal bedchamber', that of Hugo's Cosette, of course, but also, though Gauguin does not trouble to say so, that of Madeleine. And while Victor Hugo's announcement, 'One might, at a pinch, introduce the reader into a marital bedchamber, into the virginal bedchamber never[46]', preludes an entire chapter spent in that forbidden sanctum, Gauguin had resolved never to enter it, for all the 'hot sexual blood[47]' ruddying his cheeks. When explaining the work to his colleagues, he did not, of course, speak of Madeleine, but of the artist's destiny.

One of the wretched ■ By inscribing the title of Hugo's novel on his painting, Gauguin seems to suggest that his subject is in part a reflection on suffering and Evil.
For the portrait might indeed be that of a 'poor wretch' in either of the two senses of Hugo's term *misérable*. 'To hunger or thirst is the starting point; the endpoint is to be Satan himself', says Hugo[48]; suffering brings man to evil, and poverty makes him wretched. The struggle between Good and Evil that several times unfolds within the conscience of the convict forms the major theme of the novel. The Jean Valjean of this portrait seems very much that of the chapter 'Despair From Within[49]': a man crushed by the 'prodigious pyramid that we call civilisation', led by 'affliction after affliction to believe that life is a war', he is inhabited by a 'wild beast' who judges society and finds it deserving of his hatred, who judges Providence and finds it, too, wanting. This self-portrait seems to concentrate on the initial phase of Hugo's 'epic of the soul', that of the descent into hell.



V. Van Gogh: *Self-Portrait as Buddhist Monk* (F476). Cambridge (Massachusetts), Fogg Art Museum.

Van Gogh was overwhelmed by Gauguin's idealist account of his self-portrait: 'his description moves me in my heart of hearts', he told Theo[50]. And he immediately reciprocated with his own self-portrait 'as a Buddhist monk' (F476), which had been painted before Gauguin's self-portrait (see

inset on 'The Symbolist Portrait') and which had a similar purpose; 'I sought to depict in my portrait not just me but an Impressionist in general[51]'.

But when Gauguin's painting reached him, he was profoundly disappointed. 'Not a trace of joy'; 'Gauguin seems ill and tortured in his portrait![52]' It was the negativity of Gauguin's work to which he most objected: 'I don't like these atrocities of "the work" as a means of […] showing us the way. For us, the way is neither to endure them on our own behalf nor to force others to bear them[53]'. 'And when I place my notion next to Gauguin's, mine is equally serious but less desperate[54]', he added. Sure enough, when confronted with the ardent gaze of the monk, the convict's expression is very remote from the 'consoling' virtues sought by Van Gogh.

Though inclined to resent an ungrateful society and frustrated by the impossibility of consummating his love, Gauguin nevertheless found within himself a certain *joie de vivre*: 'The life of the artist is one long Calvary! And perhaps this is what keeps us alive. Passion is life and we die when it lacks fuel. No more of these thorny pathways – though they do have their own wild poetry[55]'. Gauguin's motive for depicting his gaze in this fashion was also perhaps the desire to get his ideas across; the cerebral side of his personality was now making its own terms. But the gaze once excepted, there is more to this figure than simple negativity: a beauty to the lines and structure of the face, a mouth bespeaking humane discrimination, and the symbolic play of light and shadow.

Gauguin's conception here is very different from that of several months previously, when he painted the *Self-Portrait (291)*. This painting is laden with significance, and the thoughts that it vehicles are in direct line of descent from those of the *Vision*; both paintings speak of the artistic life and of Gauguin's conflict over Madeleine Bernard, while embodying a more general vision of the struggles of the soul. The emphatic place it accords to suffering marks a staging-post on the road towards *Human Misery (317)*.

Jirat-Wasiutynski and Newton[56] give detailed information concerning the technique of this work, which was painted without any underlying drawing and without *pentimenti* onto an unprepared canvas that absorbed much of the paint, accentuating the matt, decorative effect of the whole. Having used white-lead in this painting, Gauguin was afraid that it might darken the colours[57].

[1] Letter from Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 11-12 September 1888 (535, **D**).
[2] Letter from Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 3 October 1888 (B18).
[3] Letter from Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3 October 1888 (544, **D**).
[4] Van Gogh's letters of 18-24 September (B16), 29 September (543), 3 October (544), 3 October (553a), 4 October (B19), 14-15 October 1888 (553), all **D** except 543.
[5] B16, 18-24 September 1888 (**D**).
[6] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 25 September 1888 (Merlhès 165, **D**).
[7] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 1 October 1888 (Merlhès 166, **D**).
[8] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 7-8 October 1888 (Merlhès 167, **D**).
[9] Merlhès 167, 7-8 October 1888 (**D**).
[10] Letter from Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 17-18 September 1888 (539, **D**).
[11] Merlhès 165, 25 September 1888 (**D**).
[12] 539, 17-18 September 1888 (**D**).
[13] 544, 3 October 1888 (**D**).
[14] Merlhès 166, 1 October 1888 (**D**).
[15] Letter to Émile Schuffenecker, 8 October 1888 (Merlhès 168, **D**).
[16] Merlhès 165, 25-27 September 1888 (**D**).
[17] Merlhès 168, 8 October 1888 (**D**).
[18] Merlhès 166, 1 October 1888 (**D**).
[19] Merlhès 168, 8 October 1888 (**D**).
[20] Merlhès 168, 8 October 1888 (**D**).
[21] Merlhès 166, 1 October 1888 (**D**).
[22] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 11 August 1888 (520).
[23] Lost letter from Vincent Van Gogh to Gauguin, 13-14 August 1888 (Merlhès LXI).
[24] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 18 August 1888 (B15).
[25] Merlhès, *Lettres retrouvées*, 1989, p. 103 (**D**).
[26] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, c. 1882-1883 (277), Dutch original.
[27] Merlhès 166, 1 October 1888 (**D**).
[28] Gauguin to Mette, c. 22 January 1888 (Merlhès 139).
[29] Merlhès 168, 8 October 1888 (**D**).
[30] Merlhès, *Lettres retrouvées*, 1989, p. 103 (**D**).
[31] C. Chassé: *Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven*, Paris, 1921, p. 54.
[32] Merlhès 166, 1 October 1888 (**D**).
[33] Merlhès 166, 1 October 1888 (**D**).
[34] Merlhès 168, 8 October 1888 (**D**).
[35] Merlhès 168, 8 October 1888 (**D**).
[36] Merlhès 166, 1 October 1888 (**D**).
[37] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 23 June 1888 (B8).
[38] Amishai-Maisels, 1969 (**D**).
[39] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 24 May 1885 (Merlhès 78).
[40] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 13-14 August 1888 (524).
[41] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 9 August 1888 (521).
[42] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, c. November 1889 (Malingue XCI).
[43] Merlhès 168, 8 October 1888 (**D**).
[44] Merlhès 168, 8 October 1888 (**D**).
[45] Merlhès 166, 1 October 1888 (**D**).
[46] V. Hugo: *Les Misérables*, Part 5, Book I, Ch. 10.
[47] Merlhès 166, 1 October 1888 (**D**).
[48] V. Hugo: *Les Misérables*, Part 3, Book VII, Ch. 2.
[49] V. Hugo: *Les Misérables*, Part 1, Book II, Ch. 7.
[50] 544, 3 October 1888 (**D**).
[51] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 4-7 October 1888 (545, **D**).
[52] 545, 4-7 October 1888 (**D**).
[53] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 8 October 1888 (546, **D**).
[54] 545, 4-7 October 1888 (**D**).
[55] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 7-9 September 1888 (Merlhès 163).
[56] Jirat-Wasiutynski and Newton, 1991 (**D**).
[57] Merlhès 166, 1 October 1888 (**D**).

Documents and bibliography:

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 11-12 September 1888 (535): see above.

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 17-18 September 1888 (539): Bernard's letter is 'imbued with veneration for Gauguin's talent – he says that he finds [Gauguin] such a great artist that he's almost afraid of him and finds everything that he, Bernard, does bad in comparison with Gauguin. And you know that this winter Bernard was still trying to pick a quarrel with Gauguin […] But he said that he dare not do Gauguin as I'd asked because he feels too shy of Gauguin – he's so temperamental, that Bernard, when it comes down to it!! Sometimes mad and malicious but I certainly don't have the right to criticise because I have the same neurosis myself'.

Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 18-24 September 1888 (B16): 'Some kind of portraitists you turn out to be: living so long one on top of the other and you still can't agree about posing […] OK! I give up. And, I repeat, no more talk of the swap. / So I still hope to do your and Gauguin's portraits myself some day'.

Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 25-27 September 1888 (Merlhès 165): 'I haven't yet replied to your plan for a swap but I like the sound of it and I'll do the portrait you want but not yet – I'm not yet up to doing it given that what you want is not a copy of a face but a portrait as I understand it – I'm observing young Bernard but I don't yet have him off pat – I may do it from memory but in any case it'll be an abstraction – Perhaps tomorrow, I don't know, it'll come to me all of a sudden'.

Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 1 October 1888 (Merlhès 166): 'We have fulfilled your wish, in a different way, true, but it doesn't matter the result is the same. Our 2 portraits. I didn't have any white-silver and used white-lead which might mean that the colour darkens and deadens – In any case it's not done from a colour point of view. I feel a need to explain what I was trying to do not that you aren't likely to guess without assistance but because I don't think I succeeded in my work – The mask of a powerful shoddily-dressed bandit like Jean Valjean who has his own inner sweetness and nobility. The hot sexual blood floods the face while the furnace-like colours enveloping the eyes suggest the fire that burns molten in the souls of painters like ourselves. The drawing of the eyes and the nose like flowers in Persian carpets epitomises an abstract and symbolic art – The background like that of a young girl with childish flowers is there to attest our artistic virginity – And this Jean Valjean oppressed and outlawed by society, with his love and his strength, is he not the image of an Impressionist of our day. And by doing it with my features you have my personal image and a portrait of each and every one of us, victims of society who are revenged on it by doing good'.

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3 October 1888 (544): 'Enclosed a remarkable letter from Gauguin that I beg you to put in a safe place as having quite exceptional importance. I speak of his description of himself which moves me in my heart of hearts. […] I shan't do a swap with the portrait of Gauguin because I think it must be too beautiful – but I shall ask him to let us have it for his first month or to reimburse his trip. / But you see that if I hadn't written to them a bit testily this portrait wouldn't exist, and Bernard's done one too'.

Vincent Van Gogh to Gauguin, 3 October 1888 (553a): 'your conception of the Impressionist in general of which your portrait is a symbol is very striking […] I feel sure in advance that this work is too important for me to want it as an exchange. But if you would be willing to keep it for us, my brother will take it. / […] I have a portrait of myself, a very ashen one […] in which I too exaggerate my personality I had rather attempted the character of a bonze a simple votary of the eternal Buddha. It gave me a lot of trouble but I'll have to redo it from scratch if I really want to express something. I'll even have to cure myself a bit more of the degradation conventional in our so-called civilised state in order to have a better model for a better painting'.

Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 4 October 1888 (B19): 'the package from you and Gauguin has arrived […] it warmed my heart to see your two faces again'.

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 4-7 October 1888 (545): 'I've just received the portrait of Gauguin by himself and the portrait of Bernard by Bernard […] / The Gauguin is remarkable at first glance but I like the Bernard […]. The Gauguin is more studied more finished. / It is as he says in the letter and mainly it makes me feel he was depicting a prisoner. Not a trace of joy. It's not remotely flesh but one could at a pinch put that down to his desire to make something melancholy, the flesh in the shadows is a lugubrious blue-tone. / […] My portrait which I'm sending to Gauguin in exchange holds its own with it I'm sure. I wrote to Gauguin in response to his letter that, if it was permissible for me to aggrandize my personality in a portrait, I had, attempting to make a portrait not just of me but of an Impressionist in general, conceived of this portrait as that of a bronze, a simple votary of the eternal Buddha. / And when I place my notion next to Gauguin's, mine's equally serious but less desperate. What Gauguin's portrait tells me more than anything is that he can't go on like that, he has to find consolation, he has to go back to being the richer Gauguin of the Negresses. / […] Gauguin seems ill in his portrait and tortured!! Wait though it won't last and it'll be very curious to compare this portrait to one he paints of himself in six months' time'.

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 8 October 1888 (546 and 547): 'never draw with Prussian blue in the flesh-tones! Because then it stops being flesh, turns into wood! […] All the same, I dare say that from a colour point of view the other Breton pictures are superior to this portrait which he's sent to me when it comes down to it in a hurry'.

Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 7 or 8 October 1888 (Merlhès 167): 'the portrait that I did for him is not for SALE it's done for him swap or no swap. All the more because it's rather hastily done and I'm seriously afraid that when he sees it he'll be disappointed – The description of what I thought and wanted to do has taken on in his imagination a beauty much greater than that of the picture'.

Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 8 October 1888 (Merlhès 168), with a sketch after the picture: 'I think it's one of my best things; so abstract that it's absolutely incomprehensible (seriously). Head of a bandit at first glance a Jean Valjean (Les Misérables) thus personifying an Impressionist painter, disreputable and always bearing a chain on the world's behalf. The drawing is really very special (complete abstraction). The eyes the mouth the nose are like flowers in a Persian carpet also personifying the symbolic aspect. The colour is rather remote from nature: imagine a vague memory of my pottery gnarled in the great fire – all the reds, the violets scored with gleams of fire like the glow of a furnace in the eyes, which are the seat of the painter's struggling thoughts – all this on a background of pure chrome [yellow] strewn with childish bouquets – Bedroom of a pure young girl. The Impressionist is pure, not yet sullied by the putrid kiss of the Beaux-Arts (École)'.

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 14-15 October 1888 (553): Van Gogh reports that Gauguin wrote to him to say that he 'absolutely does want' to swap the two self-portraits, and complimented him on his own (F476), which arrived at Pont-Aven in a consignment of seven pictures intended for exchanges.

Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 225: '[given to] Vincent (my portrait)'.

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 1 or 2 May 1889 (589): 'Here is what I think worth putting on a stretcher in this consignment: […] portrait of Gauguin [cited among paintings by himself and others, which he had just sent to Theo from Arles]'.

É. Bernard: 'Extracts from letters by Vincent Van Gogh and Émile Bernard', *Mercure de France*, June 1893, p. 117.

J. Leclercq: 'La lutte pour les peintres', *Mercure de France*, November 1894, p. 268: cites a passage from Van Gogh's letter of 4-7 October 1888 (545).

Paul Gauguin: *Avant et après*, 1903, p. 9: 'I arrived in Arles late in the night and waited for dawn in a night café. The landlord looked at me and cried: "You're the friend; I recognise you". A portrait of myself that I had sent to Vincent sufficiently explains the landlord's exclamation'.

C. Morice: *Paul Gauguin*, Paris, Floury, 1919, p. 160.

Wildenstein, 1964, no. 239 (repr.).

J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and the Impressionists', *GBA*, January-February 1973, pp. 35, 63, note 81.

Z. Amishai-Maisels: *Gauguin's Religious Themes* (doctoral thesis, Hebrew University, 1969), revised edition 1985, pp. 75-77, 97, 111-112, notes 20 and 25.

V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao (Tahiti), 1989, pp. 99-107.

M.-G. Messina: 'Gauguin et les sources littéraires', *GBA*, January 1991, p. 103.

V. Jirat-Wasiutynski and T. Newton: 'Tradition et innovation…', *Actes du colloque Gauguin […] 1989*, Paris, 1991, pp. 72-75.

Exhibitions:

Exhibition of the Moderne Kunst Kring, Suasso Municipal Museum [future Stedelijk Museum of Modern Art], Amsterdam, 1912, no. 15.
London, Leicester Galleries, 1924, no. 63.
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 42 or 94 (depending on edition).
Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 27.
Vincent Van Gogh en zijn Tijdgenooten, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1930, no. 160.
Paris, Orangerie, 1949, no. 10.
Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-1950, no. 21.
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 16.
Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, and London, Tate Gallery, 1955, no. 24.
Palm Beach (Florida), Society of the Four Arts, 1956, no. 10.
Coral Gables (Florida), Joe and Emily Lowe Art Gallery, 1956, no. 8.
New York, Wildenstein, 1956, no. 10.
Vincent Van Gogh, son art et ses amis, Mons, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1958, no. 91.
Collectie Theo Van Gogh, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, and Otterlo, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, 1960, no. 47.
Les Amis de Van Gogh, Paris, Institut néerlandais, 1960, no. 40.
Wegbereiter der modernen Malerei, Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Seurat, Hamburg, Kunstverein, 1963, no. 41.
Die Nabis und Ihre Freunde, Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963, no. 114.
Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group, 1966, London, Tate Gallery, no. 14.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1966, no. 12.
Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, 1970, no. 8.
Cincinnati (Ohio), Cincinnati Art Museum, 1971, no. 14.
Œuvres écrites de Gauguin et Van Gogh, Paris, Institut néerlandais, 1975, no. 118.
Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Toronto (Ontario), Art Gallery of Ontario, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, 1981, no. 52.

Provenance:

Given by Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, the picture arrived in Arles 4 October 1888, see Van Gogh's letter (B19), **D** above.
Theo Van Gogh, Paris, 1890.
Johann Van Gogh-Bonger, 1891.
V.W. Van Gogh, Laren (Netherlands), 1925.
Lent by V.W. Van Gogh to the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in 1930, where it was exhibited until the opening of the Van Gogh Museum.
Vincent Van Gogh Stichting, Amsterdam, 1962: Exhibited since 1973 at:
Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum – S224V/1962.



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310
Cow on the Porsac'h cliffs or Over the Abyss

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.60
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W282

This painting represents the steep, narrow creek of Porsac'h, some three kilometres west of the port of Le Pouldu (and the presumed location of *Rocky Coast, 235*, q.v.) An excursion specifically to visit this spectacular site is not implausible; it might, indeed, have been made from Pont-Aven (see *Wave, 303*).
It seems likely that Gauguin set down the bare outlines of the place during such an excursion and subsequently reworked the whole thing in the studio. If the time spent at the creek was short, as we might expect, this may have encouraged him to work from memory; his theory of working 'from the head', which was developed over the course of this summer (see *Human Misery, 317*, inset), favoured just such schematisation of form as we find here. Hoog has compared this work to Caspar David Friedrich's *White Cliffs of Rügen*[1], but its spectacular composition is probably inspired mainly by certain Japanese prints; Pichon has suggested Hiroshige's *Snow in the Kiso Mountains*, and Welsh-Ovcharov *Shoheibashi Bridge in the Snow* by Hiroshige II[2].
Into this dramatic space, Gauguin has introduced a cow. This is undoubtedly an artificial addition; the form of the cow is similar, though not identical, to that of one we have already encountered, on a Le Pouldu beach in *234* (1886).
This painting is one of a kind and is not easy to place with any accuracy; one can, at best, argue from comparison. The decorative surface here is divided into large and extremely simplified areas, each of which is individually modulated (thus systematising a tendency that first appeared in 1886 in works such as *Lollichon Field, 226*, and *Breton Women Chatting, 237*), and this, in combination with the arabesques that outline these areas, makes the work – like *Wave (303)* – a fine example of the 'second wave' Japonisme then being developed.
But *Wave* is still realistic in its draughtsmanship, and clearly earlier than this work. Here, the schematisation of the forms and the roughness of the arabesques is very different from the fine sinuous line that runs through the view of the Aven (*300*) and *Fête Gloanec (301)*, both of which date from August 1888, and clearly assigns this work to the Synthetist style (see *Vision, 308*, inset on Synthetism). It presumably dates from roughly the same period as the *Vision*; its freer treatment might suggest that it came later, but the technique of the latter, a highly experimental and carefully calculated work, is perhaps insufficiently spontaneous to afford a reliable comparison.



The site today.



Hiroshighe II: *Snow in the Kiso Mountains*. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Bernard's *Buckwheat* (Luthi 123) should also be mentioned here. The orange-toned mass on the right of the painting – a high rock, perhaps, or a haystack whose height has been exaggerated for compositional purposes – cannot help but remind us of Bernard's glowing red buckwheat stooks. *Buckwheat* is perhaps slightly later than the *Vision* (see inset), and though there is no documentary proof of the order in which the *Vision*, *Buckwheat* and the present work

Dating Bernard's Buckwheat

The date of this painting is rather significant, since it is one of the most audacious fruits of Gauguin and Bernard's summer collaboration. It shows the buckwheat harvest, which takes places in September or October; but we know that it was painted before Madeleine Bernard's departure in the second week of October, since it can be seen in the background of a photo of Madeleine in Breton costume (see the reproduction, page 446).
Questions have been raised as to the colour of the buckwheat stooks at the time of the photograph, since the predominant tone of *Buckwheat* was, according to Welsh-Ovcharov, originally green[1]. This is an astonishing claim, since buckwheat naturally tends to a reddish shade. Is it possible that, at an earlier stage, the colours of *Buckwheat* were less radically transposed?
At all events, it seems very likely that the anti-Naturalist colouring of this work, which is considerably more emphatic than in any earlier work by Bernard, was suggested by the red background of Gauguin's *Vision*. Bernard could hardly have failed to tell us if this were not so.

[1] See B. Welsh-Ovcharov in the catalogue of the 1981 Toronto exhibition (**E**), p. 304.



É. Bernard: *Buckwheat* (Luthi 123). Private collection.

were created, their kinship of motif suggests a dialogue.
In this experimental composition, spectacular layout and decorative surface combine with an original and satisfying volumetric effect: the tactile aspect of certain of the masses and their vertical extension remind us of Gauguin's taste for spaces that are both paradoxically warm and downward opening. Manifested only intermittently, this penchant is illustrated, for example, by *Breton Woman with Pitcher (267)* and *Flageolet Player* (W361, 1889), and may have inspired the title *Over the Abyss* [*Au-dessus du gouffre*] bestowed on the work by Gauguin at the 1891 sale.
An 1891 zincograph, *Maritime Drama. Brittany* (Guérin 7), makes use of a certain number of similar elements – waves breaking at the foot of cliffs, a cow, and haystacks – but adds a human drama absent from this highly original composition.

[1] M. Hoog: *Gauguin*, Paris, 1987, p. 41.
[2] Le Pichon, 1986 (**D**); B. Welsh-Ovcharov in the catalogue of the 1981 Toronto exhibition, entry for no. 50 (**E**).

Documents and bibliography:

Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): among the no. 20 canvases, 'Seascape with cow [valued FF] 300'.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
G.-A. Aurier: 'Paul Gauguin', *La Vie moderne*, 24 May 1891, p. 97.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 282 (repr.).
V. Jirat-Wasiutynski: *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1975), microfilm version, 1993, pp. 139-140.
Y. Le Pichon: *Sur les traces de Gauguin*, Paris, 1986, p. 86 (repr.).

Exhibitions:

Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 38 or 43 (depending on the edition).
Paris, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1936, no. 81.
Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group, London, Tate Gallery, 1966, no. 12.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1966, no. 11.
Art Nouveau, Belgium, France, Houston (Texas), Institute for the Arts, Rice University, and Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago, 1976, no. 38.
Ukiyo-e Prints and the Impressionist Painters, Tokyo, Sunshine Museum, Osaka, Osaka Municipal Museum of Fine Arts, and Fukuoka, Fukuoka Art Museum, 1979-1980, no. 95.
Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Toronto (Ontario), Art Gallery of Ontario, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, 1981, no. 50.
Space in European Art, Tokyo, National Museum of Western Art, 1987, no. 103.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 53.
Gauguin y la escuela de Pont-Aven, Mexico, Museo del Palacio de Bellas-Artes, 1995-1996, no. 56.
Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 38.

Provenance:

On deposit for sale at Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890; see list, **D** above.
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 29 in sale and auctioneer's book: *Over the Abyss*, FF 230 to M. de Cholet, 22 rue de l'Arcade (Paris). Bequeathed by comte Guy de Cholet in 1923 to: **Paris, Musée des Arts décoratifs – 29196**.

311
Still Life with Three Little Dogs

Oil on wood. 0.920 × 0.625
Signed and dated lower left: *P Go 88*
W293

Its seems likely that his work was not painted directly from nature, but very largely 'from the head', in accordance with Gauguin's new Synthetist principles (see *Human Misery*, *317*, inset).
Gauguin may have had in mind a scene similar to that of the thirsty kitten that he had painted a year before in a corner of *Conversation, Tropics (251)*. The frontality of the table-top clearly derives from the still life *Fête Gloanec (301)* painted in mid-August. Are the two kissing pears a distinctly more Synthestist version of those in *301*? Or where they something that Gauguin had seen in his immediate environment, as he probably had the patterned yablecloth and the Quimperware bowl? A not dissimilar tablecloth features in the mysterious still life *263*, while the bowl, which reappears in *Fruit*, *312*, confirms that this work was painted in Pont-Aven.
Along with *Wave (303)*, this canvas is surely one of those most directly inspired in their subject-matter by Japanese tradition. Thirion (**D**) compares it with a print of cats by Kuniyoshi, which is indeed very similar in its compositional *parti pris* and upright format; Wichmann cites a sketch of kittens and puppies by Hokusai, which shows a freshness and humour very much akin to those of the present work[1]. Whether or not Gauguin knew these particular works, the spirit of this painting is indeed analogous, and the model afforded by Japanese animal drawings is very much to the fore. In Berger's view (**D**), this work also anticipates the *japoniste* style of 1890s posters.
At the same time, with its 'three little dogs, three goblets and three apples', described by Frèches-Thory as coming straight out of 'a children's story'[2], the work seems perfectly to exemplify the agenda set by Gauguin and Bernard around the second fortnight of August. Van Gogh reports: 'Gauguin and Bernard now speak of doing children's painting. I prefer t hat to the painting of the decadents". On the other hand, there is nothing to indicate that it was painted at that precise moment. In its naïve and brutal composition, it cannot help but remind us of Bernard's *Breton Women in the Meadow* (Luthi 114) and *Self-Portrait* (Luthi 133), which very probably inspired Gauguin not only in this respect but also in his systematic use of a Prussian blue notable for its crudity (see inset). And both of Bernard's works date not from August but from the second half of September.



K. Hokusai: *Sketches of Animals*.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



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Neither shadow, nor depth ■ At all events, this highly experimental work undoubtedly bears the mark of Gauguin's collaboration with Bernard. The iconoclasm innate in the younger man had encouraged Gauguin's sense of defiance, and as Denis later recorded, 'Both […] manifested the same predilection for paradoxical solutions to the problems of painting[4]'.
Bernard was probably the first, that summer, to produce such a juxtaposition of schematic elements, brutally outlined, and lacking either depth or logic. He was presumably also among the first to completely abandon shadow, of which *Breton Women in the Meadow* shows not the slightest trace. And it must be thanks to his example that, in *Little Dogs* too, the three goblets throw no shadows, though the fruit at their feet are not entirely shadowless.
At the time, this question was a thorny one for the artists, even for Bernard, who had himself done much to pave the way for this move. 'You're discussing with Laval about shadows and you ask me if I give them a complete miss', Gauguin wrote to him a little later. 'As a way of explaining light, yes. Look at the Japanese […] and you'll see life outdoors in the sunlight without shadow. […] put shadows in if you find them useful, don't if you consider yourself no slave to them. They are, as it were, at your service[5]'.

Naïve Painting, Brutal Painting

'The critics at the time accused us of seeking a return to babbling infancy. And we were indeed returning to childhood, we were playing stupid', Denis recorded[1]. He added: 'These rough, naïve drawings by Bernard and Gauguin are the symbolic notation invented by a sensibility reduced to its own means[2]', thus emphasising the profound coincidence between Synthetist stylisation and an anti-rational and instinctive primitivism. The task was to return to the most elementary forms of picture-making, putting aside academic principles and, indeed, every traditional value-system, in order to recover one's virgin perception; to rediscover the unity of being and the vital energy it bestowed, which was increasingly lost to a modern society ever more technological and comfortable; to regain that underlying 'savagery', 'instinct' and 'imagination' whose loss Gauguin, along with many others, so deeply regretted (see *Vision, 308*, inset on Synthetism, 'The Heart of Synthetism').
The traditional values of society had in any case been shaken, and there were those who believed that the only route to the attainment of truth was a direct and wholly unreligious – almost existential – approach. This rang true with the twentieth century too, which drew heavily on the sources of this primitivism (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset on 'The Modern World', and *Vision, 308*, inset on Synthetism, 'Like a Child', and 'Where Synthetism Led').

Enfeeblement and decadence ■ It was not merely the weight of materialism that was afflicting society. The 1880s were a time of decline and fall. Economic and demographic growth had hit a trough, and perhaps this relative crisis was insidiously sapping the vitality of the new generation, at a time when the collapse of ancient mental structures was already undermining its spirit and intellect. Schuré referred to a 'desiccated generation, lacking illumination, ideal and faith […] uncertain either of itself or of human liberty', whose scepticism during the 1880s often took the form of 'decadence'[3]. 'Religion, morals, justice, everything is in decline', declaimed Baju in the first number of *Le Décadent*; '[…] modern man is blasé. / Refined appetites and sensations, refinement in luxury and sensuality; neurosis, hysteria, hypnotism, morphine addiction, scientific charlatanism, exaggerated Schopenhauerism, such are the symptoms foreshadowing social change'. Baju considered such changes 'ineluctable'[4] – and perhaps he was right, for not dissimilar manifestations are associated with the hyper-sophistication of post-modern Western society in these early years of the twenty first century.
Neither the values of previous ages nor positivist confidence could deflect the sentiment of impotence overwhelming the decadent soul; irrational forces gradually infected the *fin de siècle* (see *Vision, 308*, inset 'Positivism and the Ideal').

New blood ■ The vigorous and sometimes brutal manifestations of certain pioneering souls stood at poles from this decadence. One of the first to wipe the slate clean was Cézanne. He was one of the great initiators of this tendency: 'I confess that too much knowledge frightens me, I prefer naivety[5]', he said, and could rightly declare 'I am the primitive of a new art[6]'.
Bernard was the artist who worked hardest to disseminate into modern art the exemplary 'deformities' and loftily independent vision of Cézanne. In particular, between 1886 and



P. Cézanne: *Portrait of Achille Emperaire* (Venturi 88). Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

1888[7], he had discovered in *père* Tanguy's shop Cézanne's *Portrait of Achille Emperaire* (Venturi 88) and advised Eugène Boch to buy it; undoubtedly this astonishing painting helped to push him towards the abrupt manner that he in his turn imparted – at times – to Gauguin (see also *Vision, 308*, 'Like Cézanne,…', 'Like Bernard,…' and inset on the influence of Cézanne).
Van Gogh, for his part, naturally tended toward a very direct form of expression: 'the momentum of my bony carcass is such that it goes straight to the heart of the matter. The resulting sincerity is sometimes perhaps original in respect of my feelings, as long as the motif can accommodate my brutal and hapless methods[8]'. And in June 1888, he too painted the bust of a Zouave, which he described as 'horribly harsh', a 'brutal combination of clashing tones'; he wanted 'always to be working on portraits vulgar and even gaudy like that'; he wanted to 'paint like a hooligan', making 'outrageously exaggerated studies' that were 'atrociously ugly'[9]. Recommending that paintings should have 'a crude aspect', he concluded 'it's not us contemporaries who are the decadents[10]'. Soon the very materials of painting would be appreciated for their coarseness, in defiance of all academic prescription; see *Les Alyscamps, 316*, inset.

Clearly, tastes were changing, moving toward the abrupt; even in an inveterate Impressionist like Monet, the critics perceived 'a cannibal eye', a 'crude art', 'intensity of colour and brutality of stroke'[11]. As early as 1886, Edmond de Goncourt was astonished to find that 'My taste has been changing for some time now. I no longer enjoy the prettiness and fine detail of Japanese objects as much as I did; my taste is seduced by the barbarity of certain products of its industrial art, in particular by the coarse, by brutality and garish colours[12]'.



V. Van Gogh: *Zouave* (F423). Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).

[1] M. Denis: 'De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au classicisme', *L'Occident*, May 1909, p. 188.
[2] M. Denis: *Journal*, Paris, 1957, vol. II, p. 180: entries for 1915.
[3] E. Schuré: preface to *Les Grands Initiés*, 1889, reprinted 1899, Paris, p. xii.
[4] A. Baju: *Le Décadent*, 10 April 1886, no. 1, in J. Lethève: *Impressionnistes et symbolistes devant la presse*, Paris, 1959, p. 188.
[5] Remarks recorded by Bernard, see L. Venturi: *Cézanne*, Geneva, Skira, 1978, p. 84.
[6] See catalogue of the *Cézanne* exhibition, Paris, London, Philiadelphia (Pennsylvania), 1995-1996, p. 220.
[7] See catalogue of the 1995-1996 *Cézanne* exhibition, entry for no. 19.
[8] Vincent Van Gogh to Gauguin, 3 October 1888 (553a).
[9] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 21 June (501), 15 August (525), and 11-12 September 1888 (535).
[10] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 26 August 1888 (527).
[11] J.-K. Huysmans in *La Revue Indépendante* and A. de Lostalot in *GBA* in June 1887, see D. Delouche: *Claude Monet à Belle-Isle*, Arles, 1992, pp. 76-77.
[12] E. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 7 December 1886.

Prussian Blue

At the very moment when Gauguin was painting the *Vision* using Prussian blue borrowed from Bernard (according to Bernard's 1903 account[1]: see *Vision, 308*, 'Like Bernard: Stylisation'), Van Gogh was asking Theo for a stock of tubes of paint, which he wanted for the fall of the autumn leaves: 'I wouldn't want to be short of yellow or blue at that time of year'. On the other hand, he added, 'if you're out of pocket I can manage perfectly well without the expensive blue […] A tube of Prussian blue does as much as six of ultramarine and cobalt and costs a third as much. / True, it does rather tend to fade, but by using zinc white and using it unmixed I can at a pinch get by without the rest. / Delacroix swore by this low-life blue and used it a lot[2]'. Consumption of Prussian blue further increased after Gauguin's arrival, when the orders went up to three large tubes[3].

So Prussian blue had much in its favour. It was less obtrusive than the black which Gauguin, Bernard and others had used in their outlines, and it also enhanced the brilliance of Van Gogh's yellows. Even before meeting Bernard, Gauguin had, for similar reasons, used blue to draw in the figures in his canvases (for example, in *Young Breton Bathers, 297*), though this was obviously done with a lighter touch.
Undiluted or highlighted for its own merits, Prussian blue had a crude effect that Edmond de Goncourt deprecated in Delacroix's 'coarse' harmonies: 'sealing-wax red, harsh Prussian blue, violet and porcelain yellow[4]'. For precisely this reason, it was better suited to the 'brutal' painting toward which the avant-garde was now steering (see inset on naïve painting, and *Les Alyscamps, 316*, inset on 'Crude Materials').

[1] É. Bernard: 'Notes sur l'école dite de Pont-Aven', *Mercure de France*, December 1903, pp. 675-682.
[2] Vincent to Theo van Gogh, 26 September 1888 (541a).
[3] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 12-16 November (562).
[4] E. de Goncourt: *Journal*, 12 March 1885.

Blank gaze, existential act ■ Gauguin seems, for some time now, to have been attracted – we do not know why – towards childhood: young Bretons had formed the subject of several recent works, from *Round Dance (296)* to *Wrestlers (298)*. And now this same spirit of childhood was impelling the Synthetists toward stylistic gestures of 'crude' or 'naïve' kind, toward what was in



H. Matisse: *Colocynths*. New York, the Museum of Modern Art (Mrs Simon Guggenheim Fund).

fact a very pure form of primitivism, and one which was to thrive throughout the twentieth century (see inset on brutal painting). As Frèches-Thory notes, Matisse's *Colocynths* is based on similar principles[6].
Very late in Gauguin's Breton campaign, *Fruit (312)* similarly displays a blue outline, limited coloration, and a not dissimilar form of still life.
Gauguin not long after painted another innocent animal scene, *Little Cat (321)*, a *japoniste* decorative painting scarcely less naïve than *Little Dogs*, with which it also shares the floral designs featured in the tablecloth here.

[1] S. Wichmann: *Japonisme*, Paris, 1982, p. 47.
[2] See C. Freches-Thory in the catalogue of the 1988-1989 exhibition (Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, **E**).
[3] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 26 August 1888 (527).
[4] M. Denis, Preface to P. Sérusier: *ABC de la peinture*, Paris, 1942, p. 58.
[5] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, late October-early November 1888 (Merlhès 176).
[6] See the catalogue of the 1988-1989 exhibition (**E**).

Documents and bibliography:

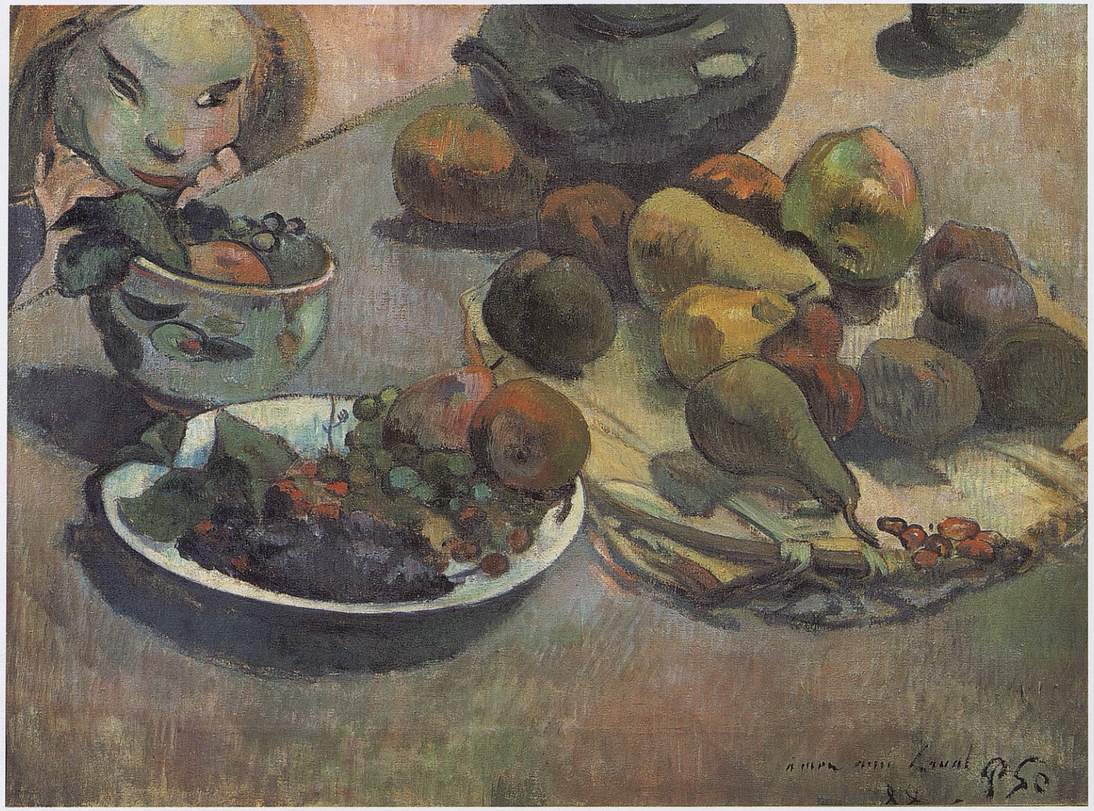
Letter from Thea to her husband Carl Sternheim, 30 December 1927 (in P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven […]*, Sigmaringen, 1997, p. 99, note 220): 'There can be no doubt that the *Still Life* by Gauguin and his *Young Girl* […] were bought with my money and therefore that these works belong to me [German original]'.
Y. Thirion: 'L'influence de l'estampe japonaise dans l'œuvre de Gauguin', *GBA*, special Gauguin number, January-April 1956 (published 1958), p. 106 (repr.).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 293 (repr.).
K. Berger: *Japonismus…*, Munich, 1980, English edition 1992, pp. 155-156.

Exhibitions:

Vienna, Miethke, March-April 1907, no. 35 (*Dogs and Fruit*, for sale).
Internationale Kunstausstellung [des Sonderbundes…], Cologne, Städtische Ausstellungshalle, 1912, no. 155 (*Meal of Three Little Dogs on a Table*, which seems to belong, like the following picture, to K.E. Osthaus – but the ownership attribution system in the catalogue is not completely clear).
Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, and London, Tate Gallery, 1955, no. 22.
New York, Wildenstein, 1956, no. 8.
Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago, and New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1959, no. 12.
Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group, London, Tate Gallery, 1966, no. 13.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 54.

Provenance:

Schuffenecker: a reproduction of this work appears in a set of Druet-Vizzavona photographs traceable to Jeanne Schuffenecker. They were no doubt taken in the first quarter of the twentieth century to assist the sale of works in the hands of Amédée Schuffenecker, who dealt in Gauguin's works early in the twentieth century (on Amédée, see *Geese in the Meadow, 184*, inset).
Perhaps: K.E. Osthaus, Hagen (Germany), c. 1912 (see **E** above).
Thea Sternheim, Munich: see 1927 letter, **D** above (Thea and her husband the dramatist Carl Sternheim had a large collection of modern French painting early in the twentieth century. According to the catalogue of the exhibition *Manet bis Van Gogh*, Berlin and Munich, 1996-1997, p. 426, this painting was bought by the Sternheims after they had seen it at the Cologne exhibition of 1912, see **E** above).
Mrs Thea Sternheim sale, Amsterdam, Muller, 11 February 1919, no. 2.
According to information from the New Burlington Galleries in 1936, this work passed through Vollard's hands at some stage.
Private collection, 1936.
Alien Property Custodian, New York.
Sale, New York, Office of the Alien Property Custodian, 1944.
Bought in 1952 by:
New York, The Museum of Modern Art, Mrs Simon Guggenheim Fund – 48.52.



312

312
Fruit

Canvas. 0.43 × 0.58
Signed, dated and dedicated lower right:
à mon ami Laval / PGo / 88
W288

According to Bessanova[1], the figure *88* is later than the rest of the signature. But this work, with its almost monochrome surface and Prussian blue outlines, is clearly close in date to *Little Dogs (311)*.

A question might nevertheless have arisen whether it was painted in Pont-Aven or Arles, that is, before or after 22-23 October. But in the south of France, the harvesting of the fruit depicted here, in particular of mulberries (on the plate next to a mulberry leaf), peaches and grapes has long finished by late October[2]. This must therefore be a Pont-Aven work of September or early October. The bowl, incidentally, seems to be the one depicted in *Little Dogs*.

The painting may have been presented to Laval before Gauguin left Pont-Aven, making it one of the many works swapped between artists at this time (see *Les Misérables*, *309*). Certainly, Gauguin's dedication to Laval must antedate the sudden cooling of their friendship in 1890 (see Laval's portrait, *238*, inset 'The Rival').

The 'classically' Japoniste layout strongly recalls not only Monet's *Galettes* (D. Wildenstein 746) but Gauguin's own still life *263*. Along with *Little Dogs*, this work perhaps constitutes a sort of experiment: within a compositional *parti pris* of similarly reduced coloration, Gauguin deliberately changed a small number of parameters with a specific effect in mind. Thus the composition of *Little Dogs* is as frontal and static as *Fruit* is 'confused' and dynamic; this appearance of movement recurs in *Autumn (313)*. In the present work, it seems – as we shall see – to relate to the destabilising aspects of the subject. *Fruit* is undoubtedly a Synthetist experiment making deliberate play with 'symbolic' and 'subjective' distortion (see inset on 'A "Symbolic" Language of Form', and *Vision*, *308*, inset 'Synthetism' – Internal Synthesis').

Temptation ■ As in *Vision* or the self-portrait *Les Misérables*, the 'language of form' is put to work in a composition already laden with symbolic meaning. But the thoughts underpinning those works could be elucidated only by reference to Gauguin's correspondence and reading, whereas here his meaning can be directly perceived; this highly expressive scene unquestionably stages the classic theme of Temptation.

The choice of subject is easy to explain. For Gauguin, Madeleine Bernard combined the attractions and prohibitions of the forbidden fruit, and he had already alluded to this in her *Portrait* (*305*), his self-portrait *Les Misérables* (*309*), and the *Vision (308)*. Moreover, it is possible that certain ceramics from the previous winter had already hinted at similar thoughts.

Temptation is a Judeo-Christian subject of vast philosophical connotations, and Gauguin seems to approach it from a sexual standpoint. The disquieting creature that he depicts borrows traits from two of his own figures of temptation: the sidelong glance and bright red lips with upturned corners are those of Madeleine Bernard, while from the promiscuous Pont-Aven woman of portrait *293* come (we believe) the prominent brow outlined by orange hair. The sexual allusion here may be reinforced by the dedication to Laval, whose 'Cossack' tendencies (Gauguin's term)[3] were well known. If we are to judge by his picture *On the Way to Market* (in which he depicts himself intently ogling her), Laval was fully acquainted with the facile temptations of the *Bretonne* portrayed in *293*.



P.P. Rubens: *Faun and Bacchante*, 1610-1612. Private collection, Switzerland.

It is fascinating to see how a variety of different threads that had appeared over the course of the previous few months are here woven abruptly together to create this bizarre creature. The forehead, mouth and eyes form one such thread; another is the rudimentary modelling of the head, with its barely delineated features, like certain Breton women in the *Vision* or Bernard's *Breton Women in the Meadow* (Luthi 114). Then there is Gauguin's orientation toward the strange and the animal, which had given us the exaggerated ears of the little *Little Breton Bather* in July (*295*). The combination of these two aspects produces a disquieting 'mask' effect, to which Gauguin soon afterwards returned in a drawing and a zincograph (Guérin 5), both reproduced on page 535; in a portrait of *Van Gogh* (*326*); in the portrait of Meijer de Haan (*W317*); and in many other works painted in the aftermath of that portrait.



C. Laval: *On the Way to Market*, detail of the picture reproduced on page 437. Private collection.

A murderous streak ■ Now contemplation of this figure suggests that the allusion to sexuality, far from being reductive, should be understood in all its depth; Gauguin's interpretation of that central Judeo-Christian theme, the mystery of Evil, is a powerful and very modern one. Behind this feline mask, apparently surveying its prey, we divine a merciless presence capable of inflicting death.

The 'killer' instinct is a primitive and brutal one, of which Gauguin was no doubt acutely conscious during his season of frustration; it lay at the heart of his vigorous temperament, and he knew it. He is known on occasion to have settled household disputes with his fists[4], and Schuffenecker tells us that 'This descendant of [Amer-] Indians proved violent from his adolescence on. At seventeen, he half-strangled […] a quartermaster who had made an offensive remark […] Despite his technical qualifications, he returned after the (1870) war with no higher a grade than sailor, second-class, because of his wild insubordination. Then he entered the Bourse, where the first thing he did was to floor an unfortunate clerk who had ventured some innocent jest with him[5]'. Gauguin had painted himself in the guise of a bandit – see the self-portrait *Les Misérables (309)* – and Van Gogh's definition is not discordant: 'there can be no doubt that we find ourselves in the presence of an untrammelled creature with the instincts of a wild animal. In Gauguin, sex and hot blood outweigh ambition[6]'. Degas recited La Fontaine's fable 'The Wolf and The Dog', adding, in conclusion: 'You see, Gauguin is the Wolf[7]'. Gauguin acknowledged this instinct in himself and perceived it as universal: 'Civilised man! You are proud that you do not eat human flesh. / On a [life] raft, you would […]. But every day you devour your neighbour's heart[8]'.

But this – often destructive – savagery wells from the same mysterious sources as sexuality, and the strength and vitality a person may



Portrait of Madeleine Bernard, detail of *305*. Grenoble, Musée de Grenoble.



É. Bernard: *Breton Women in the Meadow*, detail (Luthi 114). Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Breton Woman, detail, drawing. Photo: Christie's.

A 'Symbolic' Language of Form

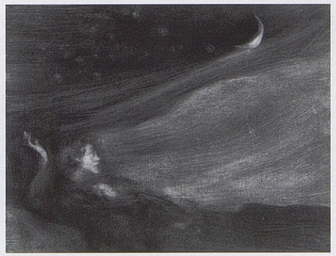
Theories ■ The inherent expressiveness of painting's formal elements – the effect of varying proportion (form), direction (line) and tonalities (colour) – had long been discussed. In this period, such analyses seemed more relevant than ever. There was a dawning realisation that the manipulation of these elements opened up a whole world of possibilities.
The ideas set out by Humbert de Superville in his *Essai sur les signes inconditionnels dans l'art* (1827) were developed by influential theoreticians, in particular by Charles Blanc, whose *Grammaire des arts du dessin* was much admired (see *Still Life with Horse's Head, 216*). They had been further enriched – and further generalised – by Charles Henry, a brilliant conversationalist in whose ideas Seurat found support for his own. Baudelaire



Humbert de Superville: *Essai sur les signes inconditionnels dans l'art*, 1827-1832, reproduced in Charles Blanc: *Grammaire des arts du dessin* (no date).

and Rimbaud's use of 'sensory correspondence' – a direct response elicited within the soul by such formal elements – underpinned the theoreticians' arguments; Henry was interested in the mathematics underlying expressiveness and sought to discern universal laws structuring the arts as a whole.
Gauguin was not averse to this trend of thought. As early as 1885, we find him saying 'there are noble mendacious lines, etc. […] there are noble tones, others that are common; calm tranquil consoling harmonies, others that excite […] Why are willows whose branches hang down called weeping willows; is it because downward lines are sad?'[1] These thoughts perhaps derive from Charles Blanc; since Gauguin had, since 1884, spent most of his time away from Paris, he was presumably unaware of the lectures given by Charles Henry at the Sorbonne on the emotional significance of lines and colours. But how long had he been familiar with these ideas? Had they come to him by instinct? Or was there some system in his very early experiments with dynamic surfaces (See *China Asters*, c. 1876, *37*, inset) and the many slightly later paintings experimenting with more or less 'abstract' evocative backgrounds, among the first of which is the still life *61* of 1880?
At all events, in 1888, Gauguin took his thoughts of 1885 a stage further: 'What is there to stop us making different harmonies to match our states of mind?' he wrote[2]. The shared ideas that he and Van Gogh held about the symbolism of 'suggestive' colour (see the self-portrait *Les Misérables, 309*, inset on colour, and *Blue Trees, 319*, inset) belong to the same system of thought.

Style or inward music ■ The anti-Naturalistic reaction of the 1880s gave a powerful new impulse to the destruction of form. In both painting (driven toward radicalism by competition from photography) and literature (which had no such stimulus), attention was strongly focused on the means of art considered as expressive in themselves. Synthetism discovered in these ideas a justification for its own bold stylisation: 'subjective' deformation and intuitive transposition (see the *Vision, 308*, inset on Synthetism, 'Internalised Synthesis'). Its theoretician, Aurier (who failed to distinguish Synthetism from Symbolism: see the *Vision, 308*, inset on Synthetism, 'Synthetism and Symbolism confused') dubbed this register 'the symbolic language of abstract elements'.
In a direct reference to Humbert de Superville, he suggested that 'the various combinations of lines, planes, shadows and colours constitute the vocabulary of a language mysterious but miraculously expressive, with which anyone who aspires to be an artist must be acquainted. This language […] has its own writing, its own spelling, […] even its own rhetoric, which is: style'. In consequence, these formal elements could 'be combined, softened, exaggerated, distorted […] in order to attain the overall purpose of the work: the expression of a particular notion, dream or reflection[3]'.
Gauguin himself thought that painting should make the spectator think, just as 'music makes one think, with the assistance of ideas and images, simply through the mysterious affinities that exist between our brains and particular arrangements of colours and lines[4]'. Musicality invaded almost all the arts during those years (see also, in this respect, *Blue Trees, 319*, inset on colour). Having set metre free, muted rhyme and hoarded arcane vocabulary, poetry borrowed from music the inwardness of its effects and aspired to suggest rather than describe or discourse. 'The decadents are accused of obscurity. The criticism is misplaced', Jules Renard observed. 'What is there to understand in a line of verse? Nothing whatsoever. Poetry is not a Latin unseen. I love Lamartine, but the music of his lines is quite enough for me. There is little to be gained by looking beneath the words […] it's too much to expect music to bear sense[5]'. The Symbolist critic Teodor de Wyzewa had, in 1886, demanded a 'Wagnerian form of painting', which would be 'emotional and musical'; it would 'neglect the objects that the colours and lines represent, taking them only as signs of emotions, marrying them such that their free play produces an overall impression comparable to that of a symphony[6]'. And it is true that even the forms of Symbolist painting that clung to a relatively traditional and unstylised representation (for example, that of Eugène Carrière) often made use of simplified light-effects, with much canvas given over to shadowy areas suggestive of internalised time. Fluid forms imbued with a sort of musicality are also frequently encountered.



E. Carrière: *The Contemplative*, 1901. Cleveland (Ohio), Cleveland Museum of Art (Gift King).

Freedom ■ This formal liberation led far beyond Symbolist suggestiveness and Synthetist stylisation. After Rimbaud and Mallarmé – 'Mallarmé, untranslatable, even into French' as Renard noted[7] – literature threw up examples of disjointed language that soon began to border on a kind of 'abstraction'.
In painting, the same line of thought was still being pursued half a century later, when Kandinsky declared that 'The contact of the acute angle of a triangle with a circle has an effect no whit inferior to that of God's finger with Adam's in Michelangelo[8]'.
Thus, though Synthetism never abandoned figuration, by the emphasis it laid on its formal means, it counts as one of the first contributions to a significant tendency in nineteenth-century art, which brought painting increasingly to focus on itself, and ultimately led to twentieth-century abstraction.

[1] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 14 January 1885 (Merlhès 65).
[2] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 December 1888 (Merlhès 193).
[3] G.-A. Aurier: 'Les peintres symbolistes', *Œuvres posthumes*, vol. III, 1893, p. 302.
[4] E. Tardieu: 'Monsieur Paul Gauguin', *L'Écho de Paris*, 13 May 1895, p. 2.
[5] J. Renard: *Journal*, 25 January 1889.
[6] T. de Wyzewa: 'Notes sur la peinture wagnérienne et le Salon de 1886', *La Revue wagnérienne*, 8 June 1886.
[7] J. Renard: *Journal*, 1 March 1898.
[8] W. Kandinsky: *Réflexions sur l'art abstrait*, 1931, in *Écrits complets*, II, 1970, pp. 333-334.

draw from them are sometimes boundless. Bringing this basic instinct to light constituted the most inward and profound aspect of Gauguin's primitivist quest; this was the task he afterwards set himself (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset on '"Savage" and Primitive'). It found expression in a variety of works (among the greatest of which is *Oviri*: Gray 76) but above all in his attitude to daily life.
Gauguin needed to exorcise this barbaric energy, or at least to give vent to it in clean strikes, with no 'collateral damage'. To this end, he adopted an impeccable strategy: to speak truth, and to put hypocrisy away from him as worse than evil. Above all, he would never stoop to play holier than thou: 'No one is good, no one is wicked; everyone is both, to a similar extent but in different ways […]. I've sometimes been good, and don't flatter myself on that account. / I've often been wicked, and don't regret it[9]'. Perfection might be out of reach, but lucidity was a reasonable goal, particularly for one who, as a child, stamped his feet in the garden, crying 'Baby's bad! Baby's bad!' 'Even as a boy', Gauguin concluded, 'I took stock of myself and wanted people to know it[10]'.

The supernatural ■ Gauguin's reflections in this work seem to pertain directly to the realm of the supernatural: if the narrowed right eye is that of a killer, the glitter of the left eye is that of malevolent spirit of considerable powers, and more inclined to tempt than to succumb (see inset on slanting eyes).
What is this evil being? Is it Satan himself in one of his female guises? It is reasonable to assume that, with Gauguin's spiritual awakening (see the *Vision, 308*, 'The Great Awakening') came the perception that not merely Good but Evil too was transcendent; clearly, this work marks an important first step in his thinking about the destructive powers harboured by the soul.
We know little about Gauguin's experience in this respect. The dedication of *Cahier pour Aline* carries an intriguing allusion to the 'demonic brain that nature has bestowed on me' (the context, however, leads us to expect the adjective *sauvage*: wild or savage). Morice tells us that Gauguin sometimes spoke of the 'negative effects of his thoughts or character on other men. "I have the evil eye", he would say, smiling. And, in the notes he made in Tahiti, he writes: / "Several of those who frequented me have gone mad"[11]'.
There may be an element of pose to this remark. But if Gauguin had indeed possessed such powers, their ultimate effect would have depended on the most deep-seated intentions of the man. If he could not see clearly within himself, his own non-purified desires, conscious or unconscious, might have wrought unjustifiable havoc. So a need arose for internal clairvoyance, and *Fruit* is our evidence that Gauguin sought precisely that.

Poe ■ The alarming figure depicted in this work has obvious affinities with certain creatures in Redon's *œuvre*. But it is also reminiscent of a large body of contemporary explorations of the fantastical, which we

Slanted Eyes

There is something intriguing about the almost simultaneous appearance in various works, around mid-September, of slanting eyes: in *Portrait of Madeleine Bernard (305)*,



V. Van Gogh: *Self-Portrait as a Buddhist Monk*, detail (F476). Cambridge (Massachusetts), Fogg Art Museum.

which was probably painted somewhat before mid-September; in Van Gogh's self-portrait as a Buddhist monk (F476, reproduced on page 483), which was finished before 16 September; and in Bernard's *Breton Women in the Meadow* (Luthi 114, reproduced page 458), which was painted on 16 September. (The exact date at which Bernard painted a portrait of Madeleine with eyes half-closed – Luthi 141 – has not been established.)
In Van Gogh's self-portrait, these eyes are undoubtedly 'Japanese', as he himself tell us[1], and are intended to convey the spiritual ardour of the painter. In the crude Cézannian modelling of the Bernard's *Breton Women in the Meadow*, they are reduced to slits and have no message. But one of the Breton women of Bernard's *Buckwheat* (Luthi 123), which is probably very slightly later (see *Cow on the Porsac'h Cliffs, 310*, inset) has oriental eyes of realistic form.
Concerning the eyes of Madeleine Bernard in Gauguin's portrait, it is difficult to know whether they were merely inspired by the *japoniste* context, or whether some precise description of the Van Gogh self-portrait was given in the letter that he wrote to Gauguin on 11 September[2]; the letter has disappeared. But Madeleine's eyes, like those of Van Gogh's monk, look beyond the horizons of the terrestrial world.
Yet they are very different, for unlike the mystical quest of Van Gogh's painting, Madeleine's eyes intimate a desire somewhat at odds with divine law, and powers that



É. Bernard: *Portrait of Madeleine Bernard* (Luthi 141). Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec.



É. Bernard: *Buckwheat*, detail of the painting reproduced on page 487. Private collection.

foreshadow the diabolical creature of *Fruit*, the temptress and victim of temptation. The eyes of that creature, like those of Poe's *Raven*, 'have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming'. They, in their turn, often in association with red hair, gave rise to a whole series of phosphorescent gazes: that of Meijer de Hahn, of the fox that made its appearance in 1889 (an 'Indian symbol of perversity', Gauguin tells us)[3] and of various strange Tahitian figures.
Gauguin himself claimed to have 'the evil eye' (see below, 'The Supernatural') and undoubtedly felt inklings of this disquieting power within his own soul.

[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 4-7 October 1888 (545).
[2] Missing letter from Vincent Van Gogh to Gauguin, 11 September 1888 (Merlhès LXIX).
[3] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, September 1889 (Malingue LXXXVII).

know that Gauguin loved to read: writings that make play with fear, madness and the irrational, peopled with mysterious beings, some of whom are perhaps merely projections of the hero's unbalanced mind, while others are the hero's implacable and supernatural companion, slyly shadowing his every step. One such is the vampirical double that leads the hero of Maupassant's story *Horla* to his doom; it features in the collection of the same name. We know that Gauguin had read it from a note that he made in a sketchbook used in Arles[12].

Another is Poe's *Raven*, 'bird or devil', 'thing of evil', and symbolic of a fate that 'throws its shadow' on the narrator's soul; again, we know, thanks to allusions in a letter to Bernard, that Gauguin had read this poem[13]. Though the letter was written from Arles, the absence of any explicit reference to Poe's poem seems to suggest that the two artists had discussed it during their stay in Pont-Aven. Gauguin included this bird – with its gaze like that of a 'demon that is dreaming' (see inset on eyes) – in the etching of Mallarmé (Guérin 13 and 14) that he made some years later, borrowing from a Manet illustration in Lesclide's 1875 edition of *The Raven* to depict the bird. Gauguin had also read Poe's essay *The Philosophy of Composition*, which describes the composition of *The Raven*. Baudelaire had translated this work in 1859, and it had been published several times[14]. In his essay, Poe explains how his poem had been the product of a deliberate quest for effect and originality, which were to clothe a symbolic purpose gradually revealed. This text made a great impression on Gauguin; it was particularly well suited to his cerebral character, and we find certain ideas from it set out in letters to Bernard[15] and Schuffenecker[16].

Without supposing a deliberate application by Gauguin of the principles of Poe's essay, there are nevertheless certain parallels in the goals proposed by Poe and those that Gauguin seems to have set himself in this painting. There is the calculated choice of visual means; the compositional framework designed for originality of effect; and, above all, there is the quest for the bizarre, introducing an element of the fantastical into a quotidian scene. (This last was something to



É. Manet: illustration for Poe's *The Raven*, Lesclide edition, 1875 (Guérin-Manet 85). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Portrait of Mallarmé, detail of an etching (Guérin 14). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

which he would return; see *Near Arles, 323*, inset.) And under the surface of all this was what Poe called 'some under-current, however indefinite, of meaning' – Gauguin termed it the 'magnetic flow of thought[17]' – which gives the work its symbolic charge, in this case a reflection on the savage forces pent up in the human mind. We may therefore infer that borrowings from contemporary literature, and more particularly the ideas and example of Poe (for whom he always confessed his admiration), helped Gauguin make his way toward this strange figure, in which so many meanings are condensed.

Symbolism achieved ■ With its mysterious self-evidence, this face leaves far in its wake the pointed ears of the *Little Breton Bather (295)*, and joins the company of those timeless creatures born of myth and dream who people Symbolist paintings from the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to Moreau and Redon. It belongs in the central tendency of Symbolism (or at least, that which the latter half of the twentieth century tends to perceive as such), whose concerns are the prison house of the soul and the divagations of the unconscious – and is therefore quite removed from the idealist tendency that was the habitat of the *Vision*. But far from allowing himself to be invaded by morbid or irrational forces, as so many of his contemporary artists did under the influence of 'decadence', Gauguin, lucid and virile, put them to flight. The Symbolist terrain must nevertheless have suited him, for this work is not merely his first 'classically' Symbolist and universally accessible work, it is also a cornerstone in the establishment of his own personal mythology, which in its turn became a gallery of images eloquent of his own thinking. Other figures in due course to came to join this one in his own personal Pantheon.

This first Symbolic figure was born of a reflection on Temptation, but it is also the first of a series of 'evil spirits' who hereafter make regular appearances in his work. It must surely have been brought into being by Gauguin's experience of frustration in relation to Madeleine Bernard, a suffering that could find no other expression than artistic sublimation.

At all events, no later than November of the same year, Gauguin made use of the face of this creature for the woman in *Human Misery (317)*, and that painting itself gave rise to a number of further developments. The following year, the portrait of Meijer de Hahn (W317) takes on a somewhat similar form.

[1] M. Bessonova, 1988 (D).
[2] As Monsieur Lemattre informs us.
[3] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, late October-early November 1888 (Merlhès 76); see *Still Life with Laval's Profile (238)*, inset on Laval, where, in context, the term is translated as 'brute'.
[4] V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, p. 19.
[5] In C. Kunstler: 'Paul Gauguin et la Révolution espagnole', *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, 9 January 1937, p. 7.
[6] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 2-6 November 1888 (B19a).
[7] Paul Gauguin: *Avant et après*, p. 74. La Fontaine's fable, I.V, 'Le Loup et le Chien', tells us of the starving wolf who hears a mastiff boast of the luxury in which it lives; when the wolf realises that the price of such luxury is captivity, he flees, 'and is still running'.
[8] *Avant et après*, p. 188.
[9] *Avant et après*, p. 186.
[10] *Avant et après*, p. 193.
[11] C. Morice: *Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1919, p. 39.
[12] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 220.
[13] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, late October-early November 1888 (Merlhès 176).
[14] See Z. Amishai-Maisels: 'Gauguin's Philosophical Eve', *The Burlington Magazine*, June 1973, p. 378, note 188; V. Jirat-Wasiutynski: 'Paul Gauguin and Edgar Allan Poe's "Philosophy of Composition"', *RACAR*, 1974, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 61-62: V. Merlhès ed: *Cahier pour Aline*, 1989, p. 44, note 34.
[15] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, late October-early November 1888 (Merlhès 176).
[16] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 December 1888 (Merlhès 193).
[17] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 December 1888 (Merlhès 193).

Documents and bibliography:
Catalogue of the S.I. Schukin Collection (in Russian), Moscow, 1913, no. 32.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 288 (repr.).
W. Andersen: 'Gauguin and a Peruvian Mummy', *The Burlington Magazine*, April 1967, p. 241.
W. Andersen: 'Gauguin's Calvary of the Maiden', *The Art Quarterly*, Spring 1971, pp. 100 (repr.), 101.
V. Jirat-Wasiutynski: *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1975), microfilm version, 1993, p. 250.
Paul Gauguin [in Russian museums], Leningrad and Paris, 1988, reprinted 1991, pp. 54-59 (repr., with analysis by M. Bessonova).

Exhibitions:
Moscow, National Museum of Modern Western Art, 1926, no. 3.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 55.
Paul Gauguin e l'avanguardia russa, Ferrara, Palazzo dei Diamanti, 1995, no. 14.

Provenance:
Given by Gauguin to Charles Laval.
Druet, Paris (no. 3269).
Bought from Druet's before 1908 by S.I. Schukin, Moscow.
First National Museum of Modern Western Art, Moscow, 1918.
Museum of Modern Western Art, Moscow, 1923.
Moscow, Pushkin Museum, 1948 (Inv. 3271).

313
Autumn at Pont-Aven

Canvas. 0.72 × 0.93
Signed and dated lower right:
P. Gauguin 88
W253

This very experimental landscape combines the little vertical brushstrokes of *Swineherd (302)* with a concerted *ensemble* of multi-directional strokes, and, as such, reminds us of works like Gauguin's 1886 painting *Lollichon Field (226)*, with its mosaic of techniques. But it is interesting to note the extent to which the treatment of plant life in this landscape follows on from the experiments that Gauguin had made all by him-



313



Back view of Breton woman, detail of a drawing. Glasgow, Art Gallery and Museum. The Burrell Collection.



Three-Quarter Left View of Breton Woman, detail of a drawing. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

self in Martinique the previous year. We need only look back, for example, to *Tropical Vegetation (248)* to find a decorative and already 'synthetic' treatment, one which Gauguin might seem to have forgotten in the interim.

This quest for dynamic effects is, on the one hand, the product of a long-standing tendency (see *China Asters, 37*, inset) and, on the other, of Synthetist experiments like *Fruit (312)*. The proliferation of forms rather foreshadows that of *Washerwomen (325)*. The distortion of outline is also a typical product of Gauguin's collaboration with Bernard; similar plant forms, still more 'synthetic' and stylised, appear in the Breton landscapes of subsequent years.

This work can surely be dated to the end of Gauguin's Breton campaign; it shows a certain kinship with *Fruit (312)* in the agitation of its lines, and one of the earliest Arles paintings, *Les Alyscamps (314)* seems to share this quality. The glowing red of the tree also suggests that the landscape dates from September or October.

Gauguin placed in his landscape two little figures derived from the central protagonists of *Breton Women Chatting (237)*. Though this work was in Paris at the time, the form of the left-hand *coiffe* is very accurately mirrored, and it therefore seems likely that its outline was repeated from a drawing. Gauguin does seem to have had with him in 1888 the preparatory drawings for this 1886 composition (see introduction to the first part of this campaign). Or did he perhaps have with him a sketch made from the painting? He did sometimes make such sketches for use in his ceramic work, but if such a sketch ever existed, it is no longer known.

Documents and bibliography:

Very probably: Gauguin's sketchbook c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 222: '[sold to] Bogh* 5 pics 500 (see below, Boch's letter of 4 November 1890).

Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): among the no. 30 canvases, an *Autumn Landscape with Two Little Figures*, which must be this work.

Eugène Boch to Octave Maus, 4 November 1890 (archives de l'art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): 'I've found five people who want buy a painting from him [Gauguin]; I'm sending him five hundred francs today; that'll please him no end, I think, poor fellow, and so talented! I went through some thirty or more paintings at Boussod & Valadon, and with Bernard, selected five works'. – This work, which belonged to Boch, is probably one of the five.

Wildenstein, 1964, no. 253 (repr.).

J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, pp. 49, 69, 87, note 139.

Exhibitions:

(?) *Peintures du groupe impressionniste et synthétiste*, Paris, Exposition universelle, Volpini premises on the Champ-de-Mars, summer 1889, no. 33 (*Conversation, Brittany*, though this might, strictly speaking, be *Large Breton with Little Boy in Blue*, whose hypothetical existence is mentioned in *Winter, 265*, **D**, letter to Schuffenecker, spring 1889).

Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group, London, Tate Gallery, 1966, no. 11.

Post-Impressionism, London, Royal Academy of Arts, 1979-1980, no. 84.

Provenance:

On deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890.

Bought from Boussod by the Belgian poet and painter Eugène Guillaume Boch (1855-1941). The younger brother of the Anna Boch cited at *280*, **P**, Eugène was always drawn toward France, and in 1879 came to study with Bonnat, then Cormon; in Cormon's studio he made friends with Bernard, Van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec, Russell, MacKnight and others. He lived in France for the rest of his life, but remained in contact with his cousin Octave Maus, the organiser of Les XX in Brussels. Eugène was perhaps even more important than his sister in establishing links between the French and Belgian avant-gardes. The major collection of French painters that he accumulated is clear evidence of his affinities with the avant-garde, though he himself continued to paint in a manner deriving from Impressionism. Boch came from a rich family and never needed to sell his own work; he never turned professional. His sensitive and engaging character transpires through his correspondence, in particular with Van Gogh, as it does from the many photographic or oil portraits (he posed for Van Gogh – see the portrait F462 reproduced on page 482 – for Bernard [Luthi 296], Van Rysselberghe and others). His own work is at times infused with a simple and emotional poetry.

Bought from Boch by Hector Brame, Paris.

Dr Jacques Koerfer, Ascona-Moscia (Switzerland), c. 1952.

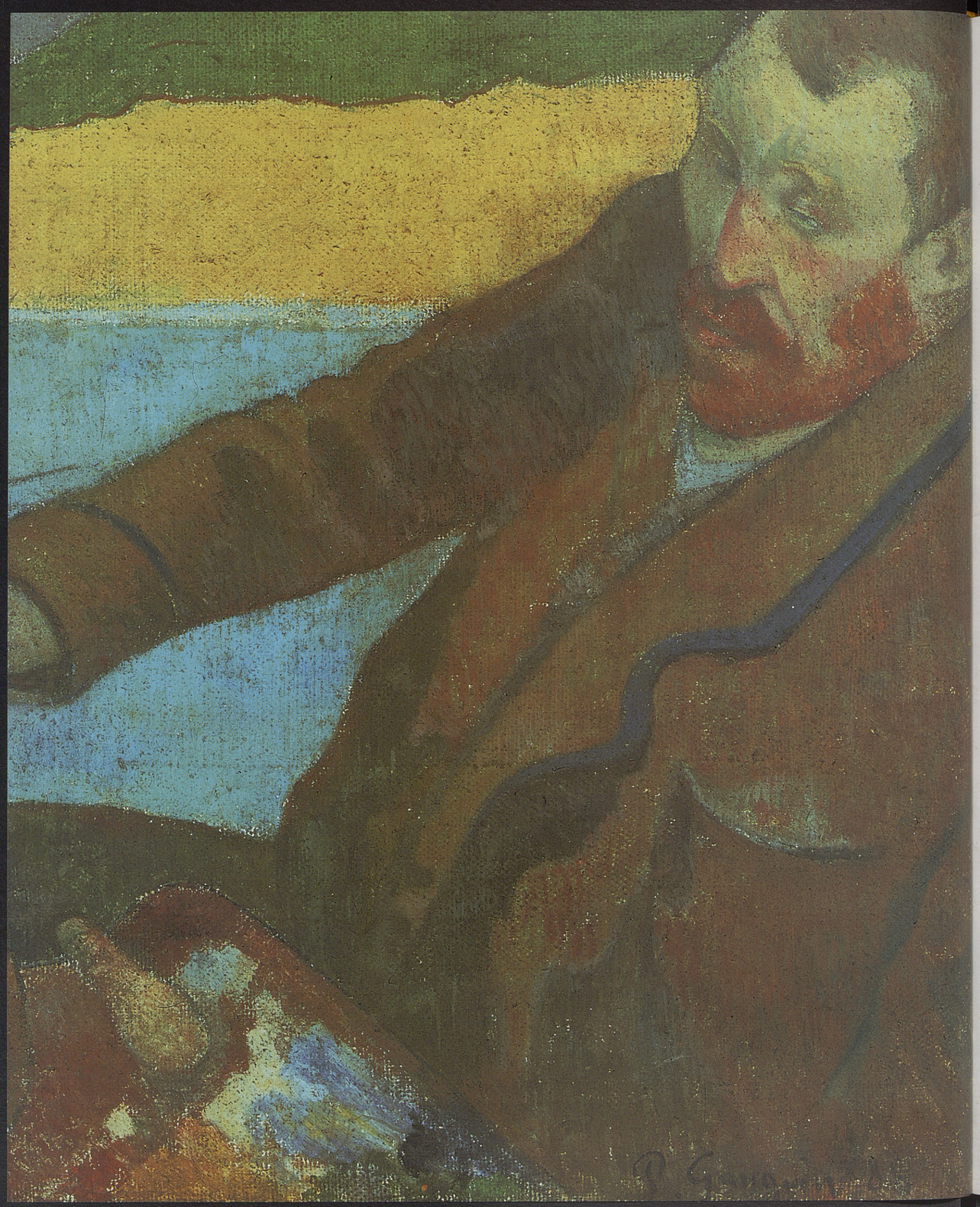
Sale, New York, Christie's, 10 May 1994, no. 7.



Eugène Boch, c. 1890. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Autumn at Pont-Aven [313], detail. ▶



With Van Gogh in Arles (October-December 1888)

Gauguin's collaboration with Van Gogh had in fact begun several months before his arrival in Arles, thanks to their incredibly rich correspondence, in which Bernard too had played his part (see the Introductions to parts I and II of the Breton campaign of 1888).

But the period in which they lived together in Arles, from 23 October to 25 or 26 December, was one of extraordinary productivity combined with intense experiment. Gauguin later summarised it thus: 'Unbeknownst to the public, two men there accomplished a colossal sum of work, which was useful to both of them – and perhaps to others too?[1]' It was accomplished, however, at the price of extenuating effort and mutual tension. Van Gogh shortly afterwards said that it had left them 'mentally exhausted', though he hoped it was not 'in vain'[2].

Spurring each other on

The year 1888 had already proved more productive for Gauguin than the preceding ones. At Pont-Aven, he had executed an average of half a dozen works per month. Spurred on by Van Gogh to 'a fever of work[3]', painting 'fit to bust[4]', over the nine weeks they spent together in the yellow house in Arles, he painted no less than seventeen works. This figure includes an unknown but sufficiently well-attested *Self-Portrait (330)*. It excludes a *Negress* concerning which we have too little information, and which, even if we assume that it was a painting in its own right, may never have been completed. It also excludes a notorious *Still Life with Pumpkin*. For these two works, hypothetical identifications can be suggested: see *Human Misery* (*317*, 'Sturdy Seated Woman') and *Little Cat* (*321*, 'Kittens and Pumpkins'). Van Gogh, in this same period, probably painted more than twenty-five works.

Since the circumstances under which these works were painted are relatively well documented, we have attempted a chronological classification of the works of Gauguin's Arles campaign.

For the first six weeks of Gauguin's stay in Arles, we have numerous letters, mainly from Van Gogh, which enthusiastically detail Gauguin's production; this information comes to a sudden end after the letter of 3 or 4 December[5]. But, if we allow that *Little Cat (321)* dates from November, five paintings for which we have no external evidence as to date can perhaps be allocated to the last three weeks of Gauguin's stay. (The crisis and preparations for departure probably stopped Gauguin working for a few days at the end.) These paintings are: *Washerwomen (325)*, *Public Garden (329)*, the portraits *327* and *328* and the lost self-portrait.

Certain of these works – certain portraits at least – lack the scale and ambition of works painted earlier in his stay, and may suggest that Gauguin's creativity was flagging somewhat towards the end. Van Gogh's testimony corroborates this; he found Gauguin tired or ill-at-ease at this stage (see *Public Garden*).

Learning from each other

Though there were difficulties, the two painters were intensely interested in each other and intensely open to each other's experience; this was what made it possible for them to work together (see the portrait of *Van Gogh*, *326*, insets). Van Gogh had long been preparing to share his experience: 'his arrival will change my way of painting, and I shall be the gainer thereby, I dare say'; 'I'm vain enough to think my work will make a certain impression on Gauguin[6]'. As to Gauguin, he enjoyed collective experiment, particularly so with Van Gogh, whose letters had already profound-

◀ *Van Gogh Painting Sunflowers (326)*, detail.



V. Van Gogh: *Woman Reading* (F497). Private collection.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



V. Van Gogh: *Carnival, Arles* (F547). Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

ly influenced him on both artistic and spiritual planes (see the introduction to the first part of the 1888 Breton campaign).
Gauguin had learned much from Bernard, above all a fundamentally different approach to the surface of the painting. Adopting methods such as firm outlines and areas of flat, even colour, he had, in Bernard's wake, taken up a manner bordering on the aggressive. He had also borrowed from Bernard compositional devices (such as that of the *Vision, 308*) or the detail of a figure (like the stooping Breton women of *Human Misery, 317*).
With Van Gogh, this exchange was less spectacular but even more intense. There are few Gauguins of this period that do not in some way refer to Van Gogh's work. Van Gogh was playing the same game, and motifs and devices constantly rebound between them as if in a game of ping-pong; the works of the one echo or sometimes directly respond to those of the other.
Together, they sought new materials (see *Les Alyscamps, 316*, inset) and parallel motifs (the Alyscamps, the sunset of *Blue Trees, 319*, the garden of place Lamartine, and portraits). Gauguin often followed in Van Gogh's footsteps (*Washerwomen,* the *Haystack* of *315*). Their parallel courses entered into dialogue when Gauguin's *Night Café* responded to Van Gogh's, or when the tormented shrub of *Public Garden* gave a second life to the already almost life-like round cedar painted by Van Gogh (see *329*).
Sometimes compositions are handed on from one to the other, as in *Public Garden*, whose layout is inspired by Van Gogh's *Memory of the Garden at Etten*, or in their portraits of *Mme Roulin* (Van Gogh: F503, Gauguin: *327*). At others, effects are communicated, and the blue trunks and yellow skies of Van Gogh reappear in *Blue Trees*, while Gauguin's description of the *Vision of the Sermon* may have suggested to Van Gogh the diagonal trunk of the *Sower* (F450) or the glowing red earth of *Les Alyscamps* (F486, F487).
The exchange also concerned fundamental methodologies. Thus Van Gogh made an effort (a short-lived one, it is true) to accept certain 'Bernardian' devices – harsh contrasts, bizarre outlines and compartmented configurations, as in *Woman Reading* (F497), *Carnival, Arles* (F547), and his portraits of Mme Ginoux and of a person unknown (F489, F533). He also allowed himself to be temporarily converted to Gauguin's theory of working 'from the head' (see *Human Misery, 317*, inset) and thus to venture into Symbolist territory in *Memory of the Garden at Etten* (F496).

'Mad' about colour

Gauguin, on the other hand, made somewhat restrained experiments with impasto (in *Human Misery, 317*, and *Woman with Pigs, 320*), then, alongside Van Gogh, set about developing his colours in such depth that he attained in Arles a exaltation and purity of colour completely unprecedented in his œuvre.
Discussion between the two men undoubtedly turned on this subject: 'we were both', Gauguin remembered, 'mad about colour, contending fiercely for beautiful colours'[7]. Gauguin could no more stomach complete conformity with Van Gogh's beloved system of complementaries than he could any other restraint of his liberty (see *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset): according to De Monfreid 'he didn't give a *tinker's cuss* for all these theories, even in 1888 or 1889 [...] he had warned Van Gogh against all these systems: division of tones, optical mix of colours, etc.[8]'. But Van Gogh anyway transcended the literal application of such principles in the way he painted, and it was the vibration of yellows on a yellow background in Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* that led Gauguin towards a 'harmonic' coloration that obeyed 'the law of derivations' (see *Blue Trees, 319*, inset).
And it seems reasonable to suppose that the subtly mixed colours of Van Gogh's *Sunset Sower* (F450 and 451) owe something of their mysterious poetry to Gauguin. By contrast, in the limpid *Public Garden (329)*, Gauguin returned to Van Gogh's preferred colours; this work seems to bring Van Gogh's 'Japanese' ideas to a logical conclusion, and to do so, perhaps, more perfectly than anything in Van Gogh's own *œuvre*.

Eccentricities

Another feature of the Arles campaign is the growing number of strange effects (see *Near Arles, 323*, inset). Their appearance sometimes seems completely unconnected with the subject of the work in question, as for example in *Washerwomen (322* and *325)*; in them we recognise Gauguin's incorrigible tendency to experiment, which a reading of Poe had done nothing to discourage. But in the bizarre and funereal *Public Garden (329)*, we detect the anguish and unease that gradually invaded the days he spent in close collaboration with the increasingly unstable Van Gogh. With the exception of *Human Misery (317)*, which had no doubt been conceived before Gauguin left Pont-Aven, the Arles campaign includes scarcely any paintings that one could describe as Symbolist, though fragmentary meanings can be perhaps be read into works like *Public Garden (329)* and perhaps *Washerwomen (325)* and *Blue Trees (319)*, the latter of which Gauguin sometimes entitled *Your Turn Will Come, My Beauty!* The simple fact is that the company of a painter as talented as Van Gogh directed him above all toward aesthetic experiment, and in Arles, Gauguin developed forms of Synthetism very different from those that he had created in Pont-Aven at Bernard's side.
'It's maybe a pity Gauguin and I gave up too quickly on the question of Rembrandt and light, we had made a start on it[9]', Van Gogh wrote, shortly after Gauguin's departure. The two of them had, then, discussed how to render light and shade. 'We work on and argue about colour, where they talked about *chiaroscuro* and [tone] values', Van Gogh remarked about Rembrandt[10], and, speaking of the lit candle placed in *Gauguin's Armchair* (F499), he stated that he had 'sought a light effect using light colours[11]'. There are, of course, studies of light in *Red Vineyard* (F495) and *Sower* (F450 and 451), and in Gauguin's *Blue Trees (319)*, but Van Gogh seems to have felt that their joint research in that area could have gone substantially further.

[1] Paul Gauguin: *Avant et après*, p. 11.
[2] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 28 January 1889 (574).
[3] *Avant et après*, p. 11.
[4] Gauguin to Mette, mid-December 1888 (Merlhès 190).
[5] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3 or 4 December 1888 (560).
[6] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3 October 1888 (544).
[7] Paul Gauguin: 'Natures mortes', *Essais d'art libre*, January 1894, p. 273.
[8] In C. Chassé: *Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven*, Paris, 1921, p. 38.
[9] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 17 January 1889 (571).
[10] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 4 August 1888 (B14).
[11] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 17 January 1889 (571).



V. Van Gogh: *Paul Gauguin's Chair*, December 1888 (F499). Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).



314

314
Les Alyscamps

Canvas. 0.92 × 0.73
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin. 88
W307

To the south-west of the walls of the old city, the vast pagan and later Christian necropolis, Les Alyscamps, had been in disuse since the end of the Middle Ages; it had been pillaged and in large part destroyed. Nothing remained of it but a long avenue flanked by sarcophagi, offering a pleasant walk for Arlesians. It was less than a quarter of an hour from the little yellow house, and provided the first of the motifs that Gauguin and Van Gogh decided to work on in parallel. Van Gogh painted four views there, F568, F569, F486 and F487, and Gauguin two: this one and *316*.
Of these six works, only two – F568 and the present work – were painted on conventional closely-woven canvas, and they must have been the first of the two series. The others, painted on coarse jute bought in late October (see *Les Alyscamps, 316*, inset) no doubt followed close on their heels, since the two bird's-eye views by Van Gogh, F486 and F487, were completed by 2 November.
The classical subject and traditional layout also encourage us to place this work among the first works painted at Arles, particularly since it is, in places, close in manner to the Pont-Aven landscape *313*. Perhaps this is the 'big landscape' to which Van Gogh refers; he tells us that Gauguin was working on it four days after his arrival[1].
Gauguin positioned himself on the north bank of the avenue, which is itself invisible; it is down to the right, flanked by the row of autumn-yellow poplars. Centre left, the canal de Craponne directs the spectator's gaze toward the octagonal lantern tower of Saint-Honorat, which had lain disused for a century. The splash of very bright red in the form of a bush is an effect that we have already encountered, for example in *Breton Woman with Pitcher (267)*. Somewhat unrealistic as a representation of plant-life, it reminds us that Gauguin was then in quest of the 'perfect vermilion' (see *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset on 'Red').



Gauguin set up his easel to the left of these trees, at the top of the bank that rises from the path. Photo: Dieuzaide.

[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 27-28 October 1888 (558b, D).

Documents and bibliography:

(?) Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 27-28 October 1888 (558b): 'we have, of course, already set to work: he has a negress and a big local landscape on the go'. This could equally be *Haystack (315)*, but the present work, whose subject was a more obvious choice early in Gauguin's stay, seems the likelier identification.
Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, c. 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 183): 'I have just handed a roll of canvases in to the parcel post. […] 3° landscape or the three graces at the temple of Venus'.
Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49) – among the no. 30 canvases: 'Arles landscape with three Arlésiennes, [valued FF] 300'.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 307 (repr.).
M. Hours: 'Macrophotographies d'après quelques œuvres de Gauguin exposées à Papeari (Tahiti)', *Bulletin du laboratoire du musée du Louvre*, 1965, p. 42 (repr.).
R. Pickvance: *Van Gogh in Arles*, New York, 1984, pp. 13-15, 18 (on the Alyscamps), 197-200 (repr. of this painting and Van Gogh's F568).

Exhibitions:

Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 40 or 45, depending on the edition.
Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 29.
Paris, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1936, no. 33.
Paris, Orangerie, 1949, no. 11.
Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-1950, no. 23.
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 12.
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental du Prieuré, 1985, no. 91.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 56.

Provenance:

On deposit for sale at Boussod et Valadon, Paris, from around 22 November 1888: see Merlhès 183, **D** above.
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 12 (*Les Alyscamps*, FF 350 to M. de Cholet, 22 rue de l'Arcade).
Vicomte Guy de Cholet, Paris.
Donated to the Musée du Louvre by comtesse Vitali in memory of her brother, vicomte Guy de Cholet, in 1923.
Deposited with the Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris.
Transferred to the galeries du Jeu de Paume, 1938.
Paris, Musée d'Orsay – RF 1938-47.



315

315
Haystack, near Arles

Canvas. 0.92 × 0.73
W308

Unlike most of Gauguin's Arles production, this landscape was not painted on the coarse jute bought late in October (see *Les Alyscamps, 316*, inset). It may, like *Les Alyscamps (314)*, be one of the very first paintings of Gauguin's Arles campaign.
'I shall need time to take in the character of the place, and I don't expect to do any serious work within a month; everything that I paint between now and then will be an exercise, an apprenticeship', Gauguin had noted on arrival[1].
This painting, in which light and atmosphere seem to be represented with less spontaneity and warmth than in views like *323* or *324*, might, perhaps, be such an exercise. Its deliberately Cézannesque treatment is not stylistically continuous with any other works of Gauguin's stay, and is therefore difficult to date precisely. There is no conflict between season and motif; even today, autumnal cereal stacks awaiting threshing are not unusual[2].
Van Gogh had painted a striking series of views showing stooks of wheat or haystacks in June 1888, and these may have influenced Gauguin's choice of subject at a time when the area was new to him. However similar the subjects, however, the difference in treatment is equally striking. It was, of course, a natural thing for Gauguin to be affected by memories of Cézanne's work; this was equally true of Van Gogh, who noted in June 'Things I've seen by Cézanne come back to mind whether I like it or not […]. Nature around Aix, where Cézanne worked, is just like here, it's still in the Crau[3]'.
But perhaps Gauguin also needed to take his distance from Van Gogh; there had been a tinge of opposition to their emulation since early in the stay, and their different reference points were increasingly clear. 'Vincent sees Daumiers to do in this place, whereas I see coloured Puvis mixed with Japan', Gauguin noted very shortly after his arrival[4]. This landscape responds to the 'Daumier' aspect of Van Gogh's haystacks not with 'Japan' but with 'Cézanne', whom Gauguin always greatly admired (on this topic, see, in particular, the still life *144*, inset).
Finally, there is nothing to show that the second *Mas*[5], whose existence Gauguin noted on page 72 of his 1888-1890 sketchbook[6], is not this painting, rather than *323*. If so, it may have figured in the exhibitions of Les XX and Volpini in 1889, in the Boussod inventory of 1890, and in the Gauguin sale of 1891. However, we cannot be sure whether the title *Les Mas* was always given to the same canvas, and the question of identification is therefore a thorny one. On the basis of slight preferences, we have suggested one identification (**P** below); for others, see *323* and *324*.

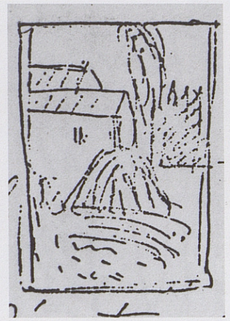


V. Van Gogh: *Haystacks* (F425). Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum Collection.

[1] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 27 October 1888 (Merlhès 175).
[2] The term *meule* is conventionally translated 'haystack', but may, as in the case of the famous Monet series, refer to cereal crops stacked with their heads of grain to await threshing.
[3] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 13 June 1888 (497).
[4] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, late October or early November (Merlhès 176).
[5] The term *Mas* (Languedoc) is used of a Provençal farm or country-house in the traditional style.
[6] Gauguin's sketchbook, 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 72.

Documents and bibliography:

(?) Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 27-28 October 1888 (558b) – cf. *Les Alyscamps (314)*, **D**.
(?) J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Perhaps: Vollard Archives, Vollard to Miethke, 6 March 1907: 'Please find below the net prices of the pictures that I sent you for sale or return […] no. 7 Gauguin Arles Landscape 1800 F'; this might equally be *Blue Trees (319)*.
Perhaps: Vollard Archives, 1907 diary, Tuesday 6 August: 'Sent to the Prague exhibition of Michel and Kimbell ([via] Camille Mauclair) the following 23 paintings at the prices indicated below [among six Gauguins, the last named is] 7 Arles Landscape (6) [FF] 3500'.
André Lhote to Gabriel Frizeaux, 11 November 1908 [Moueix, 1969 (below), pp. 269-270]: 'I've just come from Vollard's […]. From the pictures he showed me, I unhesitatingly chose [three landscapes, which he describes]. There is also a landscape that those messieurs Leblond [important Redon collectors] like; for me, it's a bit geometrical and not very moving. / Here's the layout of it: [sketch of the picture] A haystack with stooks on the ground, two houses; dark in the distance'.
Frizeau to Marius and Ary Leblond, 13 December 1908 [Moueix, 1969, p. 450): 'The Vollard case arrived yesterday evening […] *Arles*: fine, flame-like colour, slight monotony about the lines'.
Frizeau to M. and A. Leblond, 21 December 1908 (Moueix, 1969, p. 451) – Frizeau decided to keep the Gauguins sent by Vollard and commented on them: '[as to] the "Arles Haystack", here, perhaps through contact with Van Gogh, the inner flame blazes up. The mind wishes to free itself, impose its intention on nature'.
(?) Vollard Archives, 1910 diary, Wednesday 27 July, in the middle of a list of a dozen works by Gauguin, which seems to have been made in connection with the Dresden exhibition: 'Arles 4000'.
(?) R.S. [Richard Stiller]: 'Die Ausstellung von Paul Gauguin bei Arnold', *Dresdner Anzeiger*, 16 September 1910, p. 2: 'An Arles landscape leaves one thinking that it was at that time that Gauguin did the most advanced pictures, from a colour point of view, of his entire European corpus' (German original).



Sketch in the letter from André Lhote, 11 November 1908. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

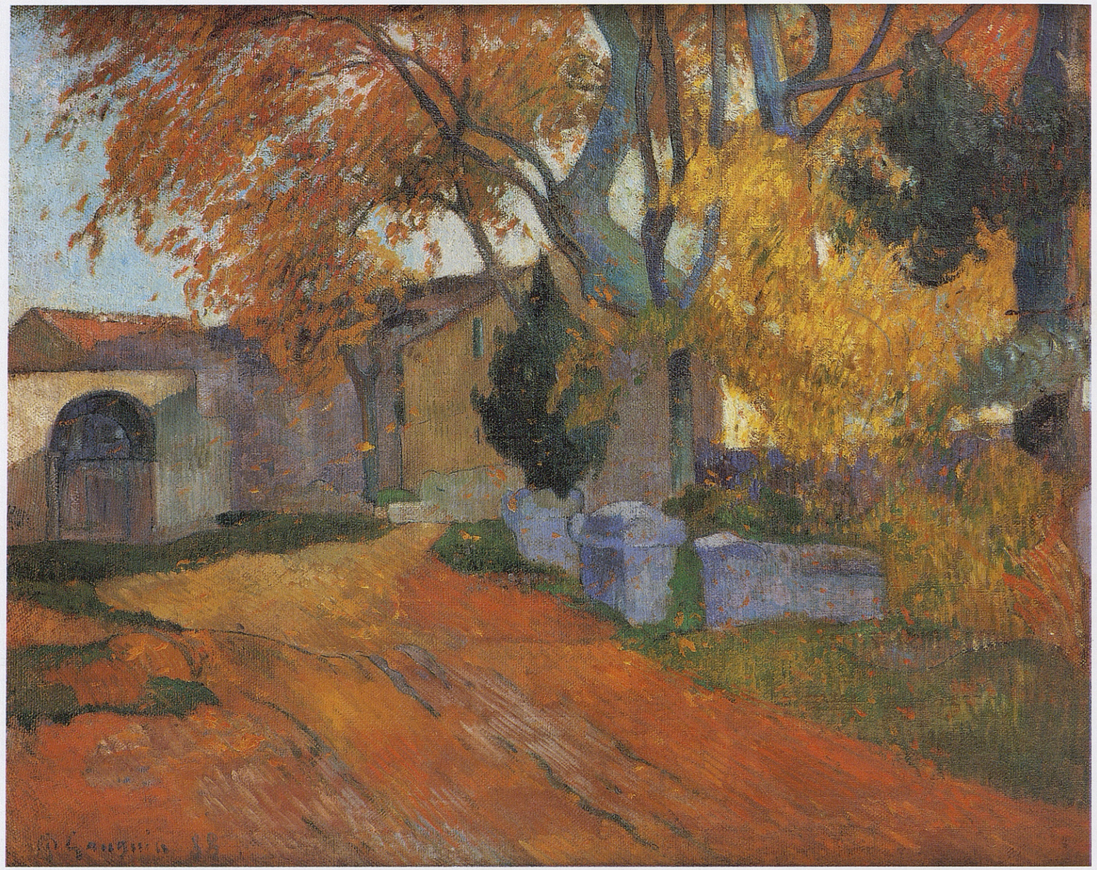
(?) P. Fechter: 'P. Gauguin. Zur Ausstellung in der Galerie Arnold', *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*, 23 September 1910: cites the *Arles Landscape* exhibited at Arnold.
(?) P.F [Fechter]: 'Ausstellung. Dresden', *Kunst und Künstler*, 1 October 1910, p. 107 (in P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven…*, Sigmaringen, 1997, pp. 46, 93, note 146): cites the *Arles Landscape* exhibited at Arnold.
Vollard Archives, 1912 diary, Wednesday 11 December: 'Sold to Monsieur Thannhauser in Munich […] Gauguin haystack 4000'.
C.G. Heise: *Die Sammlung des Freiherrn August von der Heydt*, Eberfeld, 1918, no. 93 (repr.).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 308 (repr.).
J.-F. Moueix: *Un amateur d'art éclairé à Bordeaux. Gabriel Frizeau* (doctoral thesis, Université de Bordeaux), 1969, pp. 269-270, 412, 450-451.

Exhibitions:

Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
Perhaps: Vienna, Miethke, March-April 1907, no. 56 (*Landscape, Arles*, for sale). This picture seems to have been sent by Vollard to Miethke; see Vollard's letter, 1907, though this might equally refer to *Blue Trees (319)*.
Perhaps: [French Impressionists], Prague, Manes gallery, October 1907, no. 120 (*Arles Landscape)* – this work had been sent by Vollard, see 1907 diary (**D** above).
(?) Dresden, Arnold gallery, September-October 1910, no. 8: *Arles Landscape* (almost all the works in this exhibition had been lent by Vollard).
Munich, Thannhauser, 1916, pl. 34 (in M. Bodelsen: 'The Wildenstein-Cogniat Gauguin catalogue', *The Burlington Magazine*, January 1966, p. 36).
Houston (Texas), The Museum of Fine Arts, 1954, no. 11.
Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, and London, Tate Gallery, 1955, no. 27.
New York, Wildenstein, 1956, no. 12.
Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago, and New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1959, no. 14.
Paris, Charpentier, 1960, no. 39.
Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1960, no. 38.
Vienna, Belvedere, 1960, no. 12.
Wegbereiter der modernen Malerei. Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Seurat, Hamburg, Kunstverein, 1963, no. 44.
New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1966, no. 4.
Cincinnati (Ohio), Cincinnati Art Museum, 1971, no. 19.
Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Toronto (Ontario), Art Gallery of Ontario, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, 1981, no. 54.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 59.

Provenance:

(?) Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, either no. 13 (*Les Mas*, to De Monfreid, FF 245) or no. 26 (*Arles Landscape*, to Michau, 9 faubourg Poissonnière, Paris, FF 350).
Vollard, perhaps c. March or October 1907 (see letter and diary, **D** above), and in any case c. November 1908 (see letter, **D** above).
Bought from Vollard by Gabriel Frizeau, Bordeaux, in December 1908 (see letter, **D** above).
Frizeau probably returned this work to Vollard shortly afterwards; it was probably at Vollard's from 1910 on; in any case, Vollard sold it to Thannhauser (Munich), 11 December 1912 (see 1910 and 1912 diaries, **D** above).
Baron August von der Heydt, Eberfeld (Germany), c. 1918.
Neumann, Barmen (Germany).
A. Tooth and Sons, London, c. 1927.
Captain Ernest Duveen, London, c. 1927.
Agnew, London.
Hugo Perls, New York.
Given in memory of William Ray Adams to the John Herron Art Museum of Indianapolis in 1944.
Indianapolis (Indiana), Indianapolis Museum of Art, Gift in Memory of William Ray Adams – 44.10.



316

316
Les Alyscamps, Falling Leaves

Canvas. 0.725 × 0.920
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W306

In the foreground is the end of the avenue, with a few sarcophagi from the ancient necropolis; in the background, the seventeenth-century portal leading to the church of Saint-Honorat, which had remained incomplete and disused for around a century. Its octagonal bell-tower, visible in the background of *314*, is here out of sight to the left. An old postcard of the motif, seen from the same angle, is reproduced in the 1988 sale catalogue (it was lent by Pickvance).

The work is painted on jute, and is probably the first Arles work to be painted on the 'very strong canvas' bought by Gauguin in late October or very early November (see inset on materials), and used by Van Gogh and Gauguin for four of their six views of *Les Alyscamps* (see *314*). On this coarse cloth, Van Gogh painted two overhead views of the avenue, featuring orange-toned earth, flanked by rows of blue-tinged poplar trunks: F486 and 487. They were finished during the first few days of November: 'Vincent has done two studies of falling leaves in an avenue; they're in my room, you'd really like them. On very coarse but very good sackcloth[1]'. There is a close 'physical' kinship between this and the two Van Gogh works (in texture, colour-harmony, and horizontal for-



Old postcard. Photo: Christie's.

Crude Materials: Canvas and Colour

On 5 or 6 November, Van Gogh announced that 'Gauguin has bought for the house [...] 20 metres of very strong canvas[1]'. The purchase seems to have marked the realisation of a plan formed before the two had met, which involved asserting their control over the materials of painting – paints, canvas, and preparation – while overthrowing the academic principles that governed it.

Savings ▪ Reducing costs was an important motive for them. 'We shall probably give up Tasset [their paint supplier] completely, because both Gauguin and I are going for the most part to use much cheaper paints. We shall also prepare the canvas ourselves[2]', Van Gogh announced, shortly after Gauguin's arrival. He had shortly before announced his intention to prepare the canvas himself[3], having, at the time, not a penny to his name, whereas in March he had had 'some coarse canvas' prepared for him[4]; this was probably cheap, though certainly less so than the jute that Gauguin bought. At all events, Gauguin confirmed after the purchase that 'This sackcloth [...] has the [double] merit of costing us [just] 0.5 c. per no. 30 canvas and being very durable[5]'. By comparison, Tasset was selling ordinary canvas at FF 2.50 and extra high-quality canvas at FF 5.50[6].

Not like Monsieur Gérôme ▪ But economic reasons were not by any means the only ones. The 'crude' style that they sought (see *Little Dogs, 311*, insets) was to be emphasised by coarse materials; matt and rugged were now the desired qualities. For some time now the oils and varnishes that contributed to produce the slick, brilliant effects of academic painting had been held in suspicion by those sympathetic to modern tendencies in painting (see *Vision, 308*, inset on Synthetism). When, several years before, Gauguin had noted his desire for 'a very matt form of painting', he was following an Impressionist orthodoxy[7]: the textured, opaque surfaces of the Impressionists, with their bright colours framed in white (see *Snow, 98*, inset) had, for some time now, focused attention fearlessly on their relatively crude pictorial 'matter', thus paving the way for more primitive effects.

The artists of 1888 had decided to take this quest to its logical conclusion. Van Gogh had given the question some thought: 'It seems to me that the more finely ground the paint, the more saturated with oil. Now, it goes without saying that we don't much like oil. / If one were painting like Monsieur Gérôme and the other photographic *trompe-l'oeil* [practitioners], we should no doubt demand very finely powdered paints. Whereas, in fact, we quite like having a rather rustic sort of canvas. So then, if,



V. Van Gogh: *Les Alyscamps* (F487), detail of the painting reproduced on page 526. Collection and photo: Stavros S. Niarchos.

instead of grinding the colours for hours and hours [...], it was ground just enough to make it possible to handle, and no one paid any attention to the fineness of the powder, we should have fresher colours, which might perhaps darken less. [...] The price difference ought to be substantial[8]'.

The 'we' replacing Van Gogh's habitual 'I' here no doubt includes Gauguin and Bernard, both equally intent on a more rough-hewn art; indeed, in their last letter to Van Gogh, they had spoken of 'child's painting'. There was thus a collective dimension to this project, though it seems that Van Gogh had been the initiator as regards colours; he was, after all, a great consumer of paint. Van Gogh further explained that 'If Gauguin comes, I rather think that we'd make our own paints in the house, I daren't do it on my own, I'd be too discouraged if it didn't work out straight away[9]'. A fortnight later, satisfied with the coarse-grained paints sent by Tanguy, he repeated: 'For paint, it's almost certain that Gauguin and I'll grind it ourselves[10]'.

Gauguin seems at first to have let himself be dragged into this project, since Van Gogh continued in the same vein after his arrival: '[We]'ll spend much less on paint since we're going to make it ourselves[11]'. But there is no indication that he went very far down this path. At all events, by 9-12 November 1888, we find him writing: 'I don't like Vincent's paints, I want Tanguy's[12]'.

Coarse cloth ▪ Information concerning the selection of the notorious jute canvas is rarer, but the context was presumably rather similar. Some months before, both artists had simultaneously expressed a degree of preference for a rougher weave of canvas: see *Self-Portrait, 291*, 'A Zest of Primitive Art'. Gauguin liked practical and ingenious solutions, and had, very early on, bought a roll of canvas and cut it up himself (see *Apple Trees, 52*, of 1879). He had consequently had to prepare the canvas too, and had no doubt enjoyed doing so. He loved to experiment with materials, and often took particular pains to avoid the traditional 'lustrous' surface, using the absorbent preparations that he had recommended to Marie Bracquemond[13]. He had also, as Jirat-Wasiutynski and Newton point out, occasionally painted on bare canvas, no doubt still in quest of that 'primitive' matt effect (see the self-portrait *Les Misérables, 309*). So it seems reasonable to assume that he played a major role in the acquisition of the jute and in its preparation. Jute posed very specific problems, and he was quick to suggest solutions: 'This sackcloth is very difficult to stretch. The best way is to stretch them as much as possible and soak them all over, and not strike the keys until later when they are dry and slack – Like that, they take the form of the stretcher[14]'. When *Human Misery* began to flake, he immediately found a way of solving the problem (see *317*, 'Crude work'). He liked the primitive qualities of jute, and made intermittent use of it until late in his life.



V. Van Gogh: *Les Alyscamps* (F486). Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum Collection.

[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 5 or 6 November 1888 (559).
[2] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 24-25 November 1888 (557).
[3] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 8 October 1888 (546).
[4] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 4-9 March 1888 (467).
[5] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, c. 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 183).
[6] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3 August 1888 (517) and 8 October 1888 (546).
[7] Gauguin to Camille Pissarro, late May 1885 (Merlhès 79), cf. *130*.
[8] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 26 August 1888 (527).
[9] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 17-18 September 1888 (538a).
[10] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3 October 1888 (544).
[11] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 28-29 October 1888 (558).
[12] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, 9-12 November 1888 (Merlhès 178).
[13] G. Geffroy: text reprinted in the catalogue of the *Marie Bracquemond* exhibition, Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1962.
[14] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, c. 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 183).

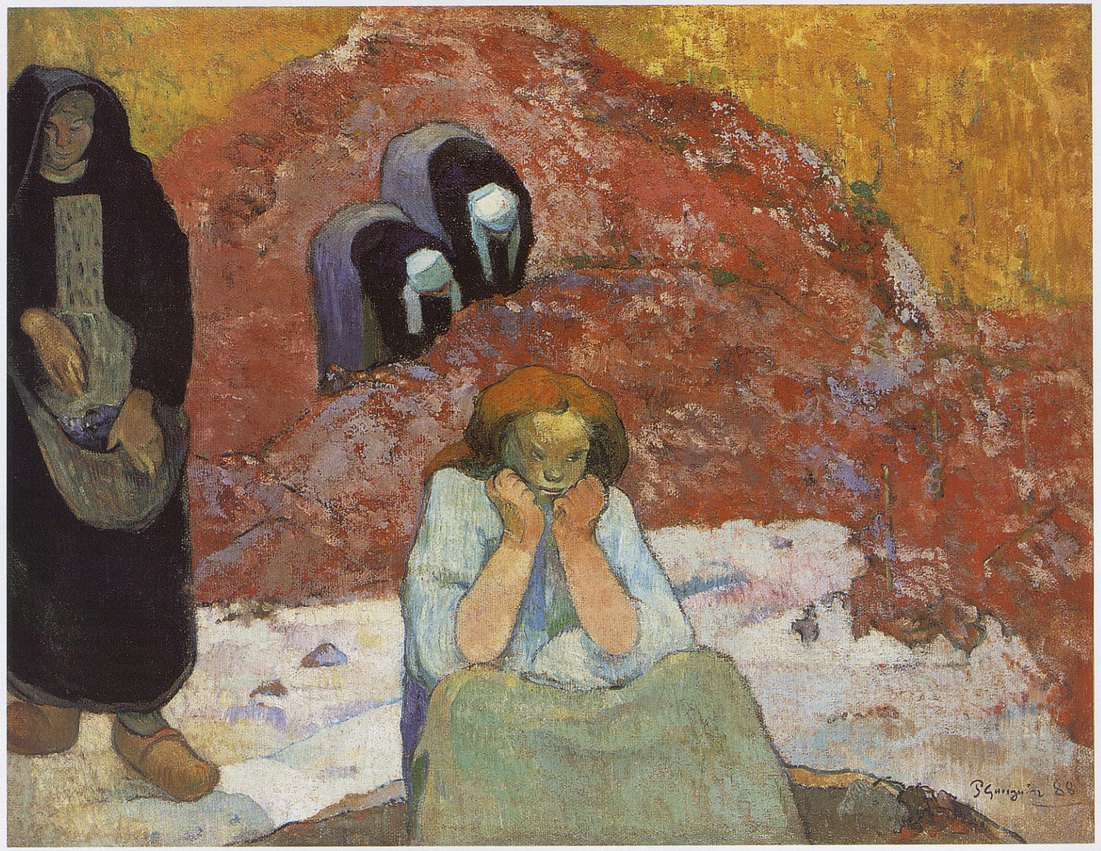
mat), and it may well be contemporary with them; early November seems a likely date. In all three works, little gold dots mark the falling leaves, finally bringing to fruition one of Van Gogh's long-held intentions. More than a month earlier, Van Gogh had been demanding that his brother send him the colours that he needed to paint 'the fall of the leaves, which will certainly be astonishing and which, as you know, lasts only a week. I'm sure I'll be able to get some good work done then and I wouldn't want to be short of yellow or blue at that time of year[2]'. Gauguin thus fell in with his friend's plan. But the exchange was not one-way: one possible reason why Gauguin especially liked Van Gogh's two views was the fact that, with their emphatic outlines and areas of flat colour (this is especially true of F486), they reflect Bernard and Gauguin's Synthetist notions, which he had just expounded.

[1] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, 2-6 November 1888 (Merlhès 177).
[2] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 26 September 1888 (541a).

Documents and bibliography:
Durand-Ruel Archives, letter no. 20/155: Durand-Ruel to Monsieur de Teray, Director of the Budapest Museum, 18 May 1907, stating that Durand-Ruel is sending a photo of Gauguin no. 11034, *Alyscamps Avenue, Arles*, FF 10,000. This letter is known to us only through a summary.
Durand-Ruel Archives, letter no. 20/453: Durand-Ruel to M. Ernst, 17 August 1907: Durand-Ruel has received Gauguin no. 11034, *Alyscamps Avenue, Arles*, back from Budapest. This letter is known to us only through a summary.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 306 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
Gauguin, Cézanne, Budapest, Nemzeti Szalon, May 1907, no. 24, 31, 38, 48 or 59, all of which were entitled *Landscape*, see Durand-Ruel letters, D above.

Provenance:
The painter Federico Zandomeneghi, Paris, c. July 1906 (deposited by him with Durand-Ruel).
Bought from Zandomeneghi by Durand-Ruel, 17 October 1907, and sold to Mme Antoine Bendenberg, Wiesbaden, 8 June 1911 (stock 8561, former no. 11304).
August Deusser, Düsseldorf.
Heirs of Deusser above, Zurich.
Sale of an heir of A. Deusser, London, Christie's, 28 November 1988, no. 16, bought by:
Tokyo, Seiji Togo Memorial Yasuda Kasai Museum of Art – LO179.



317

317
Human Misery

Canvas. 0.735 × 0.925
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin 88
W304

We have adopted the title that Gauguin conferred on this painting for the exhibitions of February and summer 1889, though he more commonly called it *Grape Harvest*, and sometimes referred to it as *Poor Woman*[1] or *Splendour and Misery*[2].
It was painted more or less simultaneously with *Night Café (318)*, and we first hear of it in a letter of 5 or 6 November, when Van Gogh wrote to his brother: 'At the moment, he has women in the vine on the go, absolutely from the head but if he doesn't spoil it or leave it unfinished it will be very beautiful and very strange[3]. Between 9 and 12 November, Van Gogh wrote again to Theo, announcing: 'Gauguin has finished his Grape Harvesters[4]'; the *Night Café* was 'almost finished'.

Walking at sunset ■ Gauguin gave much more thought to the subject of this painting than to that of *Night Café*; indeed, it had, as we shall see, been meditated and perhaps partly conceived well before *Café*. But its setting was provided by something that met the eyes of Gauguin and Van Gogh while they were out walking on 4 November: 'Sunday, if you'd been with us', Van Gogh told Theo, 'we saw a red vine-



V. Van Gogh: *Red Vineyard* (F495). Moscow, Pushkin Museum. See colour reproduction on page 524.

The Theory of Painting. 'From the Head'

The advice of the masters ■ Painting from the head – *de tête* – was a proceeding long recommended by a variety of masters, in particular those whom Gauguin admired (in the *ateliers*, they called it painting *de chic* – by 'knack'). Degas was a strong believer in painting from memory. 'If I opened an Academy, I would take a five-storey house. The model would be on the ground-floor with the first-year students. The best students would go up to the fifth floor'. It was, he said, 'an excellent thing to copy what one sees, but a much better one to draw what one sees only in memory. It's a transformation in which imagination and memory work together. You reproduce only what struck you: that is, the essential[1]'. And Degas applied his own theories marvellously during the 1890s when he made monotypes – often extremely simplified – of landscapes fleetingly glimpsed from moving horse-drawn or railway carriages. (In *Pro Patria Ludus*, Puvis de Chavannes too had made use of a landscape seen from a train-window.)[2]



E. Degas: *Mountain Landscape*, monotype, c. 1894. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Pissarro summed up matters for his son: 'The observations that you make from memory will have much greater power and originality than those made directly from nature: the result of such a drawing will be artistic, it will be *your* drawing[3]'. And Gauguin, in the 'paper' that he showed to his circle around 1886 (see *Clovis, 208*, inset), recapitulates: 'It's best to paint from memory. Then your work will be your own: your feeling, your intelligence and your soul will come through'.
The advantages of working from memory were a common enough topic, even in academic milieux. As early as the mid-nineteenth century, Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran, author of *L'Éducation de la mémoire pittoresque et la formation de l'artiste*, taught that painting from memory allow one to express 'the spirit rather than the thing[4]'. This view was shared in more enlightened circles: Baudelaire had theorised the method, suggesting that it favoured a 'hierarchy' of perception[5], and it was particularly favoured by those attracted to other forms of art, notably to the Japanese capacity for registering the fleeting aspects of reality and capturing the memory of an instant[6].
The object of the method was thus to improve the artistic quality of representation, and it was perfectly compatible with the aspiration to realism. Van Gogh's *Red Vineyard* (F495) is superlative proof of this: the impression is strikingly life-like, though the precision of his draughtsmanship has perhaps suffered somewhat in the process.

Toward abstraction ■ The pioneering artists of 1888 were particularly interested in this proceeding. It seemed to offer a clear route toward their new goals: toward the figurative 'abstraction' of Synthetism and its intuitive, schematic and subjective forms of representation (see *Vision, 308*, inset on Synthetism). It also favoured the Symbolist aspiration toward suggestive rather than realist representation in which the inner world of the soul was evoked in preference to external reality. These two facets were closely associated in the minds of Gauguin and his friends (see *Vision*, inset on Synthetism, 'Synthetism and Symbolism confused').
Much later, Bernard claimed to have been the originator of this method: 'How were we to represent *the ideas* of things? For me, the answer was simple […] we had to stop painting before the thing itself, and rework it in the imagination […] *which retained the idea of it*. […] Painting from memory allowed one to retain a *schema* of the spectacle one had seen[7]'. Bernard had a gift for stylisation and short-cuts, but had he fully developed these ideas before August 1888, when he arrived in Pont-Aven? We can at least be sure that this theory was much discussed after his arrival.
As for Gauguin, the notion of working from memory must have refined itself between 14 August, when he told Schuffenecker 'A piece of advice, don't copy too much from nature – art is an abstraction: draw it forth from nature by dreaming before her[8]' and 25-27 September when he was planning a portrait of Bernard and wrote to Van Gogh, 'I'm observing young Bernard, but don't yet have him off pat – I may do it from memory but in any event it will be an abstraction[9]'.
Gauguin's first work composed 'from the head' seems to have been the *Vision (308)*, painted in the second half of September 1888.

Educating Van Gogh and Sérusier ■ While they were still in Pont-Aven, Bernard or Gauguin undoubtedly explained this method to Van Gogh in a letter now lost, since, in early October, Van Gogh wanted to paint for Bernard a scene he had observed in a night café a few days earlier and to do it from memory (this is probably F478). However, he told Bernard 'It means doing a study for you that I'd prefer not to'; it lay quite outside his normal practice[10].



V. Van Gogh: *Clients of the Night Café* (F478). Merion (Pennsylvania), Barnes Foundation.

Despite this, it remained one of the more significant elements in the 'teachings' Gauguin dispensed to the young painters of his circle. In 1889, when Sérusier came to work at Gauguin's side in Pont-Aven, he found it quite disturbing. 'What I found most difficult was this: what part should nature have in the work? Where should one stop? And finally, as regards the physical side of painting, should one work from nature, or merely take it in and remember?'[17]
It was not in Gauguin's nature to be constrained by systems; we note that the October 1888 lesson, which resulted in Sérusier's *Talisman*, was about painting from nature. And though Gauguin's taste for studio composition was of long-standing, and this inclined him toward working *de tête*, he simultaneously continued to paint from nature and use sketches made from life.

Gauguin had no sooner arrived in Arles than he returned to this point. Van Gogh was interested. Since 1 November there had been rains and high wind, and the bad weather was a further reason to experiment. 'This blessed rain is a terrible nuisance for outdoors and we're doing painting *de chic*', Gauguin noted[11]. Van Gogh soon joined the venture: 'I'm going to start working from memory a lot. Paintings from memory are always less clumsy and look more artistic than studies from nature [...] I work from the head on bad days and that wouldn't do if I were alone[12]'; 'Gauguin gives me the courage to imagine and it's true that things from the imagination come out more mysterious[13]'. He returned to the subject in his letter of 20-22 November[14].
In this way, Van Gogh painted *Woman Reading* (F497, reproduced in the introduction to the Arles period), and above all *Memory of the Garden at Etten* (F496): in the latter, the new method fostered a Symbolist approach, allowing him to represent the garden 'not in its vulgar similitude, but presenting it as if in a dream, both in character and yet stranger than in reality[15]'. But these experiments had no successors in Van Gogh's *œuvre*; he quickly came to feel that painting *de chic* was a dead-end[16].



V. Van Gogh: *Memory of the Garden at Etten* (F496). St. Petersburg, Hermitage Museum.

[1] F. Seven: 'Degas à travers ses mots', *GBA*, July-August 1975, pp. 38-39.
[2] D. Viéville: *Les Peintures de Puvis de Chavannes à Amiens*, Amiens, 1989, pp. 28-29.
[3] Camille to Lucien Pissarro, 13 June 1883 (Bailly-Herzberg 159).
[4] K. Berger: *Japonismus...*, Munich, 1980; English edition, 1992, pp. 18-19.
[5] C. Baudelaire: 'L'Art mnémonique. Le peintre de la vie moderne V', 1863, in *Curiosités esthétiques*, Paris, Hermann, 1968, pp. 134-136.
[6] G.P. and Y.M.L. Weisberg: *Japonisme. An Annotated Bibliography*, 1990, pp. xv, 307.
[7] É. Bernard: *Souvenirs inédits sur l'artiste-peintre Paul Gauguin...*, Lorient, no date [1939], p. 13.
[8] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 14 August 1888 (Merlhès 159).
[9] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, 25-27 September 1888 (Merlhès 165).
[10] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 4 October 1888 (B19).
[11] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 14 November 1888 (Merlhès 181).
[12] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 9-12 November 1888 (561).
[13] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 12-16 November 1888 (562).
[14] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 20-22 November 1888 (563).
[15] Vincent to Wilhelmine Van Gogh, mid-November 1888 (W9).
[16] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, December 1889 (B21).
[17] P. Sérusier: *ABC de la peinture. Correspondance*, Paris, 1950, p. 39.

inset). A possible direct source for the duplication of these figures is Bernard's recent Pont-Aven paintings, *Buckwheat* (Luthi 123, reproduced opposite *Cow on the Porsac'h Cliffs, 310*) and *Harvest* (Luthi 121). The latter had caused a sensation in the *pension* Gloanec, and Gauguin had swapped one of his own works for it. We should also note the stooping figure placed by Van Gogh in his *Memory of the Garden at Etten* (F496) – finished very shortly after *Human Misery* – which came in the wake of the women grape-harvesters with which *Red Vineyard* (F495) is, of course, dotted.

yard red like red wine. Beyond, in the distance, it was yellow[5].
Both men felt impelled to record this vision, and, like *Human Misery*, Van Gogh's *Red Vineyard* (F495) evokes the red-tinged vines picked out in golden light and dotted with women grape-pickers. The paintings were begun and completed at the same time[6], and Van Gogh's strikingly recreates the spectacle afforded by the evening light. By contrast, though Gauguin returned to this spectacle in *Blue Trees*, the only trace of it here is a residuum of glittering light; description and temporality have been leached out of this composition. The work was, in Van Gogh's words, painted 'completely from the head[7]', this being the method that Gauguin had been preaching since his arrival in Arles (see inset). Indeed, in this respect, *Human Misery* is at the furthest extreme of Gauguin's experiments. Rarely, if ever, did he take 'abstraction' of the setting so far, reducing it, as we shall see, to a few symbolic elements.

Breton women ■ In this abstract landscape, Gauguin placed three women: a 'Breton woman from Le Pouldu' as he told Bernard[8], and two Pont-Aven harvesters. The Breton identities are part of the evidence that Gauguin imagined this painting before leaving Pont-Aven, and that the wonderful sunset seen shortly afterwards in Arles provided him with a meaningful setting for a work he was already planning.
There is no lack of precedent for the two stooping figures; this posture, taken up by one painter after another, was on the way to becoming a cliché (see *Winter, 265*,



É. Bernard: *Buckwheat*, 1888, detail of the painting reproduced on page 487. Private collection.



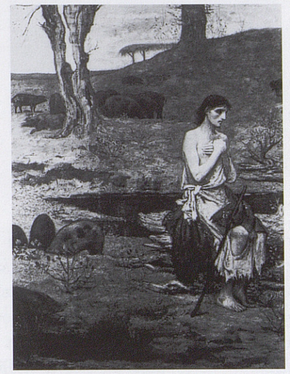
É. Bernard: *La Moisson*, 1888 (Luthi 121). Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

Coarse work ■ Like most of his Arles works – and several of Van Gogh's – this painting was done on coarse canvas. Gauguin bought twenty metres of jute sackcloth shortly after his arrival, and the two friends prepared it themselves (see *Les Alyscamps, 316*, inset). These were rather improvised efforts and did not always achieve the required solidity. *Human Misery* and the portrait of Van Gogh, *326*, were the prime casualties; 'the paint started coming off' *Human Misery* 'in flakes', 'because of the preparation[9]'. In January 1889, Gauguin told Van Gogh, 'the grape-harvest has flaked off completely because the white has separated'. Never at a loss, he reassured his friend, 'I've stuck it all back using a procedure the restorer told me', of which a blow-by-blow account followed[10].
The cloth was 'coarse' and so was the treatment of the paint. Van Gogh described both *Human Misery* and *Woman with Pigs (320)* as 'thick with paint', noting 'palette-knife work' of a kind unfamiliar in Gauguin's work and more akin to Van Gogh's own taste for thick impasto[11].
Gauguin himself repeatedly emphasised the crude power of the work, done, he said, 'using strong outlines filled in with almost unvarying tones very thick using a knife on coarse sackcloth[12]'; or again, 'simply [painted] on coarse cloth in thick oils with almost imperceptible colour divisions in an attempt to create a grand vision of things[13]'.
Gauguin implies that the coarse manner was related to the 'coarse' subject of the painting (see 'Fallen woman', below), while the simplified manner was, he felt, the proper technique for conveying thought: 'In this order of abstract ideas I'm driven to attempt synthetic form and colour. As little technique as possible, and here and there very unfinished accessories to conserve all the power of the impression made by the figure and not descend to childish knick-knacks[14]'.

Mercy on a *Misérable*

Human Misery is indeed a vehicle for 'abstract ideas', indeed, for a particular line of thought. One of Gauguin's first attempts to explain the symbolism on which he was now embarking concerns this work: 'If I produce a feeling of the beyond in you, it's perhaps by means of that magnetic flow of thought whose absolute tendency we cannot know, though we feel it's there', he told Schuffenecker; 'too bad for those who can't read [such harmonies]; we mustn't explain[15]'. Fortunately, Gauguin left us a few clues – not, perhaps, so many as we should have liked – to help us interpret his thoughts. The title *Splendour and Misery* is among the most significant of these, casting considerable light on the bipolarity of the work's subject[16].

Dark thoughts ■ The 'misery' is that of the 'poor woman' (*la pauvresse*) – this is how Gauguin refers to the painting in most of the letters written soon after its completion. Wearing a *chemise*, she sits isolated in a perplexing circle of snow inexplicably delineated on the soil. She is wholly absorbed in her sinister thoughts, and close kin to the great figurations of Melancholy from Dürer to Van Gogh (it is just possible that Gauguin knew certain of Van Gogh's own figures of despair, such as *Sorrow*). The sense of abandonment exhibited by figures such as Puvis de Chavannes's forlorn *Prodigal Son*



P. Puvis de Chavanne: *The Prodigal Son*, 1879. Zurich, Fondation collection E. G. Bührle.



V. Van Gogh: *Sorrow*, lithograph (F929[bis]). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

(which Gauguin could have seen in late 1887 at Durand-Ruel's gallery) may also have played a part in her inspiration.
Her face is already known to us; it is that of the strange personification of Temptation created a month or so earlier in *Fruit (312)*. Her posture has been compared to a variety of weary or despairing figures in works by Degas[17], Jean Benner[18] and Jules Breton[19]. More interesting derivations have been suggested, though any direct influence is far



A.-J. Gros: *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims at Jaffa*, detail. Paris, Musée du Louvre. Photo: RMN.

from certain: the figure of despair in Antoine-Jean Gros' *Plague Victims at Jaffa* (Louvre), and more particularly, a Félicien Rops engraving of a woman of the people meditating the death of her child: *In Ardenne – 'Ere's daft ol' Marie-Josèphe, broodin' on her bairn, wha's underground*[20]. This last hypothesis was put forward by Dorra[21], who notes that Van Gogh admired Rops and possessed several of his engravings but there is no knowing whether the Arles house contained a copy of *Marie-Josèphe*, and, besides, only the way in which Rop's woman sits can have inspired Gauguin, since the face resting on clenched fists is drawn from *Fruit (312)*. Dorra further suggests that the Rops engraving printed on the base of a heliogravure of *Marie-Josèphe* (see Extens 528, page 530) may have inspired *Woman with Pigs (320)*, a fascinating hypothesis which is not, alas, borne out by the facts (see *320*).

Firmly seated ■ Nor need we number among the sources of this woman the famous Peruvian mummy of the Trocadéro, perched on her narrow base, who, the following year, inspired Gauguin's *Eve* (W333). As Pope observes, there may be no need to look further afield for the sources of this figure than Gauguin's own work, and in particular the sturdily-seated Martinican women that he depicted in 1887[22]. We learn with some surprise that, four days after his arrival in Arles, Gauguin had 'a negress on the go[23]'; and the question arises whether she was not a preliminary sketch for the present figure, whose stable posture and spherical cranial bone-structure may have reminded Van Gogh of the negresses that he had so admired in *Riverside (252)* and *Mangoes (250)*. This would make it still more probable that Gauguin had meditated this composition during his Breton campaign, and set to work on it almost immediately after his arrival, before starting *Night Café*.

Fallen woman ■ In our quest to understand who this 'poor woman' is, we must return to the being whose face she has been endowed with: the temptress tempted by *Fruit (312)*. Now, that creature is a composite. She owes the upturned corners of her mouth to Madeleine Bernard, and inklings of this attribute survive in the *pauvresse*. But, in our view, the figure in *Fruit* derived in equal measure from the promiscuous Breton woman portrayed in *293*, and this second lineage predominates in *Human Misery*. Hair down, her upper half clad only in an undergarment, the woman is depicted using simplified colours in which sensual grey-greens harmonise with coppery tones. Everything about her suggests a 'woman of easy virtue' borne down by her sin and banished from society. The title *Splendour and Misery*, taken from Balzac's *Splendeur et misère des courtisanes*, is not necessarily a reflection on the woman's profession; but Gauguin confirmed the sexual connotations of the subject when, coupling this work with in *The Heat of the Day (320)*, he declared them both 'rather virile […] a little coarse', adding, 'is it the heat of the south that makes us so ruttish?[24]' (The two paintings might also be thought to present the same protagonist, one from the front, the other from the rear, however different their mythical overtones.)



F. Rops: *In Ardenne*. Lithograph with the caption: In Ardenne - "'Ere's daft ol' Marie-Josèphe, broodin' on her bairn, wha's undergroun'". M. Extens: *L'Œuvre gravé et lithographié de F. Rops*, 1928, no. 95. Photo © Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie Jacques Doucet, Paris.



Martinican Woman, detail of a pastel. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Fruit, detail of *312*. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Dorra goes further again, and, comparing this figure with that of Rops' Marie-Josèphe, supposes them both guilty of infanticide[25], a crime that was not, at the time, uncommon. 'Open the paper', exclaimed Maupassant, 'infanticides every day[26]'. Dorra goes on to describe the rejection suffered by women of the people who had 'gone astray' or 'been ruined', and in particular by unmarried women who had fallen pregnant. They were often, he says, thrown out of their jobs, and had no choice but to prostitute themselves; such, at least, was the fate of Fantine in *Les Misérables*, who perhaps lent something of herself to this figure. Infanticide was one obvious way

of avoiding such disgrace. This may seem too precise a hypothesis, but it admirably enriches the sociological context of Gauguin's *pauvresse*, emphasising her isolation and underlining the gravity of her sin, which borders on the criminal.

'Bewitched' ■ It is clear that this woman is, like Jean Valjean (to whom Gauguin had recently referred in his self-portrait *309*), a *misérable* in the sense expounded by Hugo's *Les Misérables*: at once a villain and a martyr.
Gauguin, like Hugo, reiterates the ultimate identification of wrongs done and suffered, while seemingly leaving still less room for hope. Jean Valjean was a victim of society before becoming a criminal, but the 'desolate[27]' woman of *Human Misery* seems primarily her own victim, deprived of the good life by her own actions – like all those ensnared by evil. There is nothing threatening in the vineyard on which she turns her back, but, dissevered from humanity in the near-magic of her snow-circle, she is, Gauguin tells us, 'thoroughly bewitched[28]'. Bewitched, and a prisoner; given over to 'evil spirits' that she did not exclude; the prisoner perhaps of some supernatural entity not unlike the cruel temptress of *Fruit (312)*, which has taken over her mind and even now summons her; of the forces of Evil that turn her away from the light and thrust her into this frozen solitude.

Consolation ■ The truth is that Gauguin did not, to our knowledge, write or say a great deal about such 'misery'. He did, on the other hand, describe its consolatory counterpart at some length: 'I've just written to Laval', he declared in December, 'a better world is in preparation where nature will have its own way, and men will live in the sun and be able to love. You remember Manfred. Wherever I go, wherever I sit down, in some corner of a field I shall see a man dressed in black who will look on me as a brother. / Should you see in the grape harvest a poor desolate woman, do not think her devoid of intelligence grace and every gift of nature. She's a woman. Her chin resting on her hand, she's not thinking of very much, but feels consolation on this earth (nothing but earth) where the sun floods the vineyards with its red triangle. And a woman dressed in black passes, who looks on her as a sister[29]'.
This hope of 'consolation' derives from Van Gogh, in whose mouth the word returns again and again; his faith in the manifestations of an ideal that could console one for the harshness of existence was the only thing that gave him the strength and courage to continue living. In Gauguin's letter we hear a clear echo of his conversations with Van Gogh. Very precisely when Gauguin was painting *Human Misery*, Van Gogh was writing of his 'presentiment of a new world' in which 'a generation to come […] will succeed in living at peace[30]'.
Without entering into the nuances distinguishing Van Gogh and Gauguin's thoughts, there is reason to think that this painting seeks to contrast the 'misery' of the *pauvresse* with progress toward a new world of consolatory 'splendour'. The splendour is that of the bountiful sunset over the vineyard, in which the stooping Pont-Aven women above the doomed central protagonist perhaps evoke the solace of simple physical labour. And there is also the consoling presence of another woman, who, her face in shadow, passes by and looks on the outcast 'as a sister[31]'.

Sister ■ This mysterious figure offers considerable latitude of interpretation, and Andersen[32], Dorra[33], Merlhès[34] and Amishai-Maisels[35] (amongst others) have all ventured their own suggestions. Rather than give a complete account of these, we simply note those elements of them that seem particularly illuminating.
A month and a half after completing the painting, Gauguin himself compared this figure with the black-robed personage of De Musset's *Nuit de décembre*[36]. Van Gogh had long admired this poem[37] and the two men had clearly been discussing it since both had separately referred to it in their correspondence a few days before Gauguin wrote the letter cited above; they both cite similar but inaccurate versions of De Musset's line 'who resembled me like a brother', Van Gogh remembering 'who looked on us[38]', and Gauguin 'who will look on me like a brother[39]'.
In De Musset's poem, the poet sees a 'companion shade' and addresses her with the words 'Your very pain is my affliction's sister'. Though the shadowy figure 'bears the guise of friendship', the poet reproaches her: 'You smile but do not share my joy / You pity me, but I am not consoled'. The Vision explains this paradox: 'Friend, my name is Solitude'. Though there is no certainty that this 'companion shade' directly inspired the dark figure of *Human Misery*, which was completed in early November, we may at least record that Gauguin found her entirely compatible with De Musset's solitary and romantic 'double'.



Nights, engraving after Bida. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

A hooded figure come from afar ■ Merlhès has listed a number of dark-robed figures who had struck Van Gogh[40]: these were figures of whom the two men undoubtedly often spoke. One of them was the woman dressed in black, an angel of Charity, who encourages Pilgrim in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, a text that Van Gogh had long admired. Another was the portrait of Bruyas by Delacroix, which they had seen together in Montpellier in December and which inspired a number of comparisons in Van Gogh. He told Theo that it 'was startlingly like you or me, and […] made me think of



E. Delacroix: *Portrait of Alfred Bruyas*, 1853 (Robaut 1209). Montpellier, Musée Fabre.

that poem by De Musset… wherever I set foot on earth there came a man forlorn, all clothed in black, who, sitting by our side, looked on us like a brother'. It also reminded him of 'the strange and magnificent portrait by Rembrandt in the galerie Lacaze', in which he perceived 'a certain similarity of kin or race with Delacroix or with Gauguin. I don't know why, but I always call this man "The Voyager" or 'The Man Come From Afar"[41]'.



Rembrandt (attrib.): *Portrait of a Man*. Paris, Musée du Louvre (Louis Lacaze donation).

These are images of an ideal 'double' or an invisible and benevolent figure, a guardian of the soul, and may, in some degree, have been associated with the mysterious hooded figure of *Human Misery*. But perhaps only in retrospect? We do not know whether these topics were discussed by Gauguin and Van Gogh as early as November, when the picture was painted.

The hooded Le Pouldu costume is much less spruce than that of Pont-Aven, and Gauguin surely chose it for its striking simplicity. A year later, Gauguin described that costume as 'almost symbolic', and women wearing it as having their 'heads wrapped in a headscarf like a nun[42]'; but it does not seem to carry any specifically religious connotations in this painting.

The garment and hood, all of a piece in their darkness, seem nevertheless to confer, at very least, a symbolic or spiritual dimension. The hood has overtones of another world; it is a traditional symbol of invisibility, disappearance and death. This is its first appearance in Gauguin's work, but hereafter it appeared time and time again, often, it is true, as part of the accoutrements of the *tupaupaù* or spirit of the dead, a more alarming apparition than the benevolent figure of this painting. It was, moreover, surely under Gauguin's influence that Van Gogh introduced into his nearly contemporaneous *Memory of the Garden at Etten* (F496) a sombre, veiled figure.

Redemption ■ The Le Pouldu *coiffe* (or *capot*) could be white or black, and it was the black version that Gauguin chose. Describing *Human Misery* in a letter in which he also tried to set out its symbolic nature, he noted that black was the colour of grief or bereavement[43]. Thus the hooded woman might seem to acquire certain overtones of death.

This is Dorra's view; he sees her as 'death the healer[44]'. But can companionable solitude or soothing death really be thought remedial to the accursed state under which the woman labours? It seems unlikely: though ten years later Gauguin did indeed attempt suicide, 1888 was a year of resurgent idealism and creativity during which he brimmed with vitality. And any element of romantic posing was quite alien to his very combative nature.

Let us return to the very evocative lines in which Gauguin depicts his 'poor, desolate woman': 'do not think she is devoid of intelligence grace and every gift of nature. She's a woman. […] she's not thinking of very much, but feels consolation on this earth (nothing but earth) where the sun floods the vineyards[45]'. These remarks suggest the possibility of a mystical meaning: in the inner journey through solitude or death, it is the defeated soul's bowing to the inevitable that paves the way to splendour and places the true life within its grasp.

For it must be observed that the woman described in this letter is no longer quite that of the picture. The central figure of *Human Misery* is clearly tormented by dark thoughts, while the woman in the letter has attained a state of humble submission to which words are entirely superfluous. We must therefore suppose a subtext to this scene, one permitting a transition to that state. Humble acknowledgement of sin and acceptance of forgiveness would meet this requirement, or perhaps a renunciation of some part of oneself: initiatory death as a condition of rebirth. Access to the beauties of this earth would reward such transformation (when Gauguin writes 'nothing but earth', we should no doubt understand 'nothing but this earth'): access to a truer world 'where nature would have its own way', and perhaps, beyond that, to some inner state from which all trace of duality would be lost.

This hope of redemption brings to mind Van Gogh's faith in the potential transfiguration of prostitutes, in whose degradation he saw 'sated caterpillars' soon to be transformed into butterflies; the sentiments occur in a letter to Bernard that Gauguin had undoubtedly read (see *Night Café, 318*, 'Brothels')[46]. For, as we know, Van Gogh too harboured mystical aspirations: 'Nature seems to me perfect', he confessed[47]. They were, indeed, the indestructible basis of his friendship with Gauguin, though Gauguin was less inclined to give them public utterance.

Thus the mysterious figure with her kindly face seems midway between the resplendent promise of the background and the unhappy central figure, of whom she is a kind of benevolent double; she dares to

place her foot on the glacial snow and come to the aid of the sinner in her suffering or remorse. She perhaps wears mourning for her own past life, while in her apron she bears a share of the earthly bounty hitherto denied to the miscreant.

Like the self-portrait *309*, *Human Misery* bears the mark of *Les Misérables*, which Gauguin had just read; it seems to express Gauguin's thinking about wrongs inflicted and endured, both of which bring down on one an overwhelming suffering that can condemn the life of the spirit. But it seems also to speak of the way forward to redemption, thus encompassing a series of opposites: damnation and forgiveness, solitude and compassion, imprisonment in the coils of evil and a mystical revelation of the splendour of this world.

In early 1889, the central figure reappears in a zincograph (Guérin 5) which brings out still more clearly the atmosphere of concupiscence pervading her. She then makes a further appearance in a watercolour[48]. Gauguin returned to her in an 1894 painting, *Village Drama* (W523), and a more cheerful woodcut (Guérin 69), in which the central figure seems at last to have escaped the guilt and suffering that blighted her. The *Eve* of W333, inspired by a different model, is sister to this figure rather than a descendant.

A letter from Gauguin to Van Gogh of autumn 1889 tells us that Vincent had 'made a drawing' of this picture[49]; this seems, alas, to have been lost.

[1] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 184, D).
[2] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 223 (D).
[3] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 5 or 6 November 1888 (559, D).
[4] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 9-12 November 1888 (561, D).
[5] 559, 5-6 November 1888 (D). For extensive quotation from the letter, see *Blue Trees (319)*.
[6] 559, 5-6 November, and 561, 9-12 November 1888 (both D).
[7] 559, 5-6 November 1888 (D).
[8] Gauguin to Émile Bernard (?), 2nd week of November (Merlhès 179, D).
[9] See Émile Schuffenecker to Gauguin, 11 December 1888 (Merlhès CI) and Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 18-20 December, and to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 December 1888 (Merlhès 192 and 193, both D).
[10] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, c. January 1889, (Cooper GAC 34).
[11] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 20-22 November 1888 (563, D).
[12] Merlhès 179, 2nd week of November 1888 (D).
[13] Merlhès 184, 22 November 1888 (D).
[14] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, late October-early November (Cooper GAC 37, D).
[15] Merlhès 193, 22 December 1888 (D).
[16] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890, p. 223 (D).
[17] Andersen, 1967, p. 241, note 6 (D).
[18] W. Andersen: *Gauguin's Paradise Lost*, New York, 1971, p. 293 (repr.).
[19] Dorra, 1978, p. 17, note 6 (D).
[20] *En Ardenne: – V'la co li sotte Marie-Josèphe qui pinse à en'enfant qu'on a interré.* M. Exteens: *L'Œuvre gravé et lithographié de Félicien Rops*, Paris, 1928, no. 95, repeated in heliographic form with the addition of further engravings in no. 528.
[21] Dorra, 1978 (D).
[22] Pope, 1981 (D).
[23] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 27 October 1888 (558b).
[24] Merlhès 183, 22 November 1888 (D).
[25] Dorra, 1978 and 1991 (D).
[26] G. de Maupassant, in *Gil Blas*, 17 May 1882.
[27] Merlhès 193, 22 December 1888 (D).
[28] Merlhès 181, 14 November 1888 (D).
[29] Merlhès 193, 22 December 1888 (D), and V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, pp. 238-243.
[30] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 2-6 November 1888 (B19a).
[31] Merlhès 193, 22 December 1888 (D).
[32] Andersen, 1967 (D).
[33] Dorra, 1970, 1978, 1991 (all D).
[34] Merlhès, 1984 and *Lettres retrouvées*, 1989 (D).
[35] Amishai-Maisels, 1969 (D).
[36] See above, under 'Consolation', Merlhès 193, 22 December 1888 (D).
[37] Merlhès, *Lettres retrouvées*, 1984, note 320 (D).
[38] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 18-20 December 1888 (564); see below, 'A hooded figure come from afar'.
[39] Merlhès 193, 22 December 1888 (D), see above under 'Consolation'.
[40] Merlhès, *Lettres retrouvées*, 1984, note 320 (D).
[41] Both quotations from Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 18-20 December 1888 (564).
[42] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, October 1889 (Cooper GAC 36).
[43] Merlhès 193, 22 December 1888 (D).
[44] Dorra, 1970 (D).
[45] Merlhès 193, 22 December 1888 (D).
[46] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 24 June 1888 (B8).
[47] Vincent Van Gogh to Gauguin, 3 October 1888 (553a).
[48] Reproduced in the catalogue of the 1989 exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris, no. 78.
[49] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, autumn 1889 (Cooper GAC 37, D).

Documents and bibliography:

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 5-6 November 1888 (559): see commentary above.

Gauguin to Émile Bernard, 2nd week of November 1888 (Merlhès 179): 'Purple vines making a triangle on the chrome yellow top part. To the left, Breton woman from Le Pouldu black, grey apron. Two Breton women stooping with blue-light green dresses and black bodices. In the foreground pink soil and poor woman in orange hair white *chemise* and skirt "green earth with white". All done using strong outlines filled in with almost unvarying tones very thick using a knife on coarse sackcloth. It's an effect of vineyards I saw in Arles. I've put Breton women into it – Exactitude go hang. It's my best picture this year and as soon as it's dry I'll send it to Paris'. (Letter illustrated by a sketch of the painting, see reproduction.)

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, between 9 and 12 November 1888 (561): One thing you'll be glad of, Gauguin's finished his painting of grape-pickers it's as beautiful as his Negresses [*250*] and if you paid the same price as Negresses let's say (400 I think it was) that would still be good […]. I've finished one too, a picture of a vineyard all purple and yellow with little blue and violet figures and a yellow sun'.

Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 14 November 1888 (Merlhès 181): 'Also from memory I've done a poor woman thoroughly bewitched in the middle of a field of red vines, and your brother who is very generous finds it good'.



Sketch in Gauguin's letter (to Bernard?), 2nd week of November 1888 (Merlhès 179). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 20-22 November 1888 (563): 'The two [canvases *Women Grape-Pickers* and *Woman with Pigs*] which he's about to send you are miles better […]. Gauguin has, despite himself and against my will, rather proved to me that it was time to vary things a bit – I'm beginning to compose from the head and for that work all my studies will always be useful to me […]. His last two pictures, which you will see, are thick with paint there is even [palette-] knife work'.

Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, c. 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 183): 'I have just handed a roll of canvases in to the parcel post […] 4° Pigs / 5° Grape-harvest or poor woman. / The two last paintings are, I think, rather virile, but people will say a little coarse, is it the heat of the south that makes us so ruttish? If they do frighten off your customer don't hesitate to put them aside, I like them'.

Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 184): 'I've just sent [Theo] Van Gogh two pictures that I urge you to go and see. It's something else again, simply painted on coarse cloth in thick oils with almost imperceptible colour divisions in an attempt to create a grand vision of things – I think these two canvases superior to the others – When you have a moment, write at length and give me your critical impressions of all that'.

Émile Schuffenecker to Gauguin, 11 December 1888 (Merlhès CI): 'On Saturday I went to Goupil to see your latest pictures. I was really thrilled. They're even more beautiful than your consignment from Britanny, more abstract and more powerful. […] Your latest pictures are on coarse canvas, the paint is flaking off which is a terrible nuisance and makes them impossible to sell for now'.

Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 18-20 December

1888 (Merlhès 192): 'If the grape harvest has a few cracks that's the fault of the preparation and it'll be in the top right corner. If necessary, send the canvas back and I'll put it right'.
Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 December 1888 (Merlhès 193 and Merlhès, *Lettres retrouvées*, 1989, pp. 238-243): 'Van Gogh only mentioned one picture, the grape harvest, having cracks; I can easily repair it, I know what the trouble is./ I should really like to see it in your house, that picture is really important to me. You must give it a very simple flat frame in wood stained black like ebony tables, with the side touching the picture in chrome yellow distemper. [*Addendum*: with a copper label and engraved initials]. I'll want it back for the Brussels exhibition and put a relatively high price 2000 f on it. Like that we can be sure it won't get sold. And if something extraordinary happened and it went I'd replace it for you such that you wouldn't lose by it. / […] I've just written to Laval: [there follows the passage cited above under 'Consolation'] /. Explaining in painting isn't the same thing as writing, which is why I prefer suggestive colour, forms, and in composition a parable to a novel in paint. Many think I'm wrong and perhaps all that's in my imagination but if I produce a feeling of the beyond in you, it's perhaps by means of that magnetic flow of thought whose absolute tendency we cannot know, though we feel it's there. In painting a hand holding a handkerchief can express the feeling by which it is moved, the entire past life and life to come [this is probably an allusion to the portrait of Bruyas mentioned by Van Gogh in letter 564, see above, under 'A hooded figure come from afar…']. Since everything is convention and in French happiness unhappiness are words that express a state of things, and black [expresses] grief, why shouldn't we [painters] be able to create various harmonies corresponding to the state of our soul. Too bad for those who can't read them; we mustn't explain'. The letter ends with a drawing of the copper plate that Gauguin wanted to see on the frame, with the initials 'PGO' and the date.
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 72, preparatory list of the paintings that Gauguin was planning in February 1889 to send to the exposition of Les XX: '[no.] 30 [canvas] Grape-Harvest'; p. 73, definitive list: [no.] 9 Human Misery [FF] 1500'; p. 223: '[sold to] Schuffen Splendour and Misery [FF] 300'. This last note dates from before summer 1889 (see **P**); on page 77 of the notebook is a sketch of Gauguin's first idea for the monogrammed plate.
List sent to O. Maus in late 1888, giving the prices asked for the works to be exhibited at les XX (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): Gauguin wanted '[FF] 2500' (in large letters) or at least '1500' (in small letters). These prices are considerably higher than his average (FF 500-600), and even than the *Vision (308)* or *Heat of the Day (320)*, which he was willing to sell for FF 1,000.
Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, January 1889 (Cooper GAC 34), on the subject of the repair of the flaking canvas: see above, 'Coarse work'.
Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, late October-early November 1889 (Cooper GAC 37): 'This year the work I've done has been completely different from last, in preparation for something important I can just about glimpse. At your place in Arles I did a picture more or less right for that – the Grape-Harvest (you did a drawing of it). A seated woman, a red triangle of vines. Degas doesn't understand that one. In this order of abstract ideas I'm driven to attempt synthetic form and colour' [for what follows, see above under 'Coarse work'].
L. Lormel: 'L'individualisme et l'école traditionaliste', *La Rénovation esthétique*, August 1907, pp. 172-173: 'Recently, we have also noticed, at the Salon d'Automne, a picture by Gauguin representing the *Grape-Harvest at Arles*'. Lormel says that Gauguin's picture derives from Bernard's *Harvest at Pont-Aven* (Luthi 121).
Wilhelm Hansens Samling, Copenhagen, 1918, no. 126.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 304 (repr.).
W. Andersen: 'Gauguin and a Peruvian Mummy', *The Burlington Magazine*, April 1967, pp. 238, 241, repr. fig. 80.
Z. Amishai-Maisels: *Gauguin's Religious Themes* (doctoral thesis, Hebrew University, 1969), revised edition 1985, pp. 33-34, 147-148, 168, note 60, 170, note 778.
H. Dorra: 'Gauguin's Unsympathetic Observers', *GBA*, December 1970, p. 372, note 18.
H. Dorra: 'Paul Gauguin's Dramatic Arles Themes', *Art Journal*, Autumn 1978, pp. 12-17, repr.
K. Pope: *Gauguin and Martinique* (doctoral thesis, University of Austin, Texas, 1981), microfilm edition 1986, pp. 200-205.
V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, p. 523-528, notes 319 and 320.
V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, pp. 141, 240, note 2.
H. Dorra: 'Gauguin et l'émancipation de la femme', *Actes du colloque Gauguin […] 1989*, Paris, 1991, pp. 185-188 (repr.).

Expositions:

Shown at Boussod et Valadon, Paris, late November-December 1888 (Schuffenecker wrote on 11 December saying that he had seen the work there, see **D** above).
6e exposition des XX, Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, February 1889, no. 9 (*Human Misery*) on sale for FF 2500 or 1500: see Gauguin's letter to Schuffenecker of 22 December 1888 (Merlhès 193); list of prices sent to Maus in late 1888; list in the sketchbook c. 1888-1890, p. 73, all **D** above.
Peintures du groupe impressionniste et synthétiste, Paris, Exposition universelle, Volpini premises on the Champ-de-Mars, summer 1889, no. 43 (*Human Misery*), to Monsieur Paul Schuffenecker. Attribution of ownership to Émile Schuffenecker's son Paul, born 1884, is one of the many schoolboy jokes in this catalogue.
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1906: see Lormel, **D** above. We do not know whether the work appeared ex-catalogue or under an anodyne title, nor who lent it.
Vienna, Miethke, March-April 1907, no. 45 or 66 (*Human Misery, Pont-Aven*, for sale).
Gauguin, Cézanne, Budapest, Nemzeti Szalon, May 1907, no. 21 (*Misery*, oil painting) or no. 83 (*Human Misery*).
Moderne Franzosen, Vienna, Arnot, 1914, no. 18.
Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen, 1926, no. 49.
Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 35.
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1948, no. 37.
Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Toronto (Ontario), Art Gallery of Ontario, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, 1981, no. 56.
Van Gogh in Arles, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1984, no. 118.
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départmental du Prieuré, 1985, no. 108.

Provenance:

Sent by Gauguin to Boussod et Valadon around 22 November 1888 (see Merlhès 183, **D** above) on deposit.
Offered by Gauguin to Schuffenecker under conditions laid out in his letter of 22 December 1888 (see Merlhès 193, **D** above). The picture was nevertheless to go on sale at the exhibition of Les XX, so the offer was rather uncertain (and suggests that Gauguin then considered Schuffenecker a very close ally), not unlike the 'sale' of *Mangoes (250*, q.v.*)* to Theo Van Gogh.
Bought from Gauguin by Émile Schuffenecker for FF 300 (see Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890, before the summer of 1889, since Schuffenecker's name – humorously represented by that of his son – appears in the catalogue of the Volpini exhibition as owner of the work. Émile Schuffenecker may perhaps have ceded the work to his brother Amédée in 1904. (On Amédée, who dealt in Gauguin works in the early twentieth century, see *Geese in the Meadow, 184*, inset.)
Galerie Arnot, Vienna.
Wilhelm Hansen, Ordrupgaard, c. 1918.
Charlottenlund (Denmark), Ordrupgaard.



318

318
Night Café, Arles

Canvas. 0.72 × 0.92
Signed and dated mid-left, on the end of the billiard table: *P Gauguin 88*, and lower right: *P Gauguin 88*
W305

We have retained the title under which Gauguin sent this work to Theo Van Gogh around 22 November 1888[1].
Having, on his arrival, painted a number of landscapes *in situ*, Gauguin soon felt the need to attempt compositions with figures; the present work and *Human Misery (317)*, painted concurrently in early November, were the first of these.
Night Café was started during the very first days of the month, when Van Gogh announced: 'We've made a few excursions to brothels, and probably we'll finish up going to work there quite often. At the moment, Gauguin has a canvas of the night café that I painted but with figures seen in the brothels. It looks very promising"'. It is recorded as 'almost finished' in Van Gogh's letter of 9-12 November[2], and was completed in the second week of November. Gauguin wrote, 'I've done a café too but which Vincent really likes and I like less. Basically it's not my cup of tea and the low-life local colour doesn't suit me. I like it in other people but I'm always apprehensive. It's how I was brought up and you can't change that. Top red [wall]paper three tarts. One head bristling with curl papers the second back view with green shawl. The third



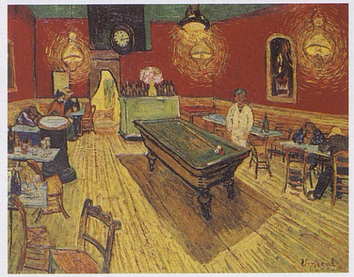
Sketch in Gauguin's letter (to Bernard?), 2nd week of November 1888 (Merlhès 179). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

scarlet shawl. Left someone asleep. Billiard table – In the foreground a rather carefully worked figure of an Arlésienne with black shawl and front [illegible] white. Marble table. A band of blue smoke crossing the painting but the foreground figure is much too proper. Oh well[4]. The letter is illustrated by a drawing after the painting.

A café ■ *Human Misery* is entirely personal in its subject; by contrast, the components of *Night Café* were selected for their proximity, and the painting as a whole is closely related to subjects chosen by Van Gogh, who had painted the café in September (F463). It was an unsurprising choice on his part, since from May to September he had roomed at this very establishment, the Café de la Gare, which was run by Monsieur and Madame Ginoux.



Arles. To the right, the two gables of the 'yellow house' (in Tralbault, 1969).



V. Van Gogh: *Night Café* (F463). New Haven (Connecticut), Yale University Art Gallery.

Pickvance tells us that its address was 30 place Lamartine[5], and it seems to be the one visible on a old photograph reproduced by Tralbault[6].

The café was just around the corner from Van Gogh's little yellow house; one of the principal landmarks of their daily life, it was also the centre of their social life. On 23 October, on his arrival, Gauguin had dropped in there while waiting for day to break. So good a likeness was the self-portrait Gauguin had shortly before sent from Pont-Aven that he was quickly recognised by Monsieur Ginoux[7]. For this was an establishment that did not close its doors when other cafés closed theirs. 'It's what they call a "Night Café" round here', Vincent explained, 'They're quite common here, they stay open all night. So "night prowlers" can find refuge there when they don't have enough for a room or are too drunk to be given one[8]'. A little later he adds that it also 'lets its rooms by the hour and from time to time you see a tart sitting there with her bloke', but it is not, he says, a brothel[9].

Van Gogh's painting, with its red, green and orange harmony, is a powerful one, and one can understand that it made Gauguin want to produce something of the same kind – though very different at the same time. It also provided an example in their discussion about intensifying the colour red (see *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset on red). The room painted by Van Gogh was surely done from life in the present work. We recognise the walls, dado and picture frames, along with the furniture – tables with cast-iron legs, mass-produced chairs, gas lamps and billiard table – and even the flute glasses and siphon on the marble table-top. But though the scene is indeed the same, Gauguin chose a point of view transverse to that of Van Gogh's painting, and preferred a horizontally ordered composition to Van Gogh's vertiginous perspective. We note in passing that compositions using layers of restaurant tables had previously been, on the whole, Van Gogh's prerogative, in pictures that Gauguin may well have known (F342, F549, and F549a).



V. Van Gogh: *Restaurant Carrel, Arles* (F549). Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Van Gogh painted his picture over three nights[10], sleeping through the days, working entirely from life and with only the gas lamps for illumination. There is no proof that Gauguin followed his example, though this work may well show a nocturnal scene, since Gauguin himself called it *Night Café* when he sent a consignment of paintings to Theo in November. The sharply delineated shadow of the billiard table may be cast by a light directly over it, but it is not clear that the gas lamps have been lit. In the last analysis, Gauguin was less interested in artificial lighting than Van Gogh, and the light in this painting, with its faintly submarine quality, is comparatively unspecific.

The regulars ■ The outrageously stylised little cat that sits under the billiard table is a cousin of the one in *321* or of the *Little Dogs* of *311*.

Not all the clients are obvious night owls. The sleeping man is presumably one of those 'night prowlers […] sprawled over the tables', a common sight there according to Van Gogh[11], who painted a number of them in his September painting (F463). Then there is the circle of prostitutes, 'figures seen in brothels', as Van Gogh notes[12], where the two men had presumably gone just to 'hang about', at his suggestion[13] (see below, 'Brothels'). True, in early October Van Gogh had not even had to leave the café to find 'a pimp and a prostitute making things up after a quarrel[14]', a scene he depicted in the painting F478 (see page 512 for a reproduction); its atmosphere is not unlike that of the present work.

Two of the little background figures were friends of Van Gogh's, and could be found in the café even during daylight hours. Since they do not appear in either the description or accompanying sketch of the painting that Gauguin sent to Bernard, it is just possible that they were added after the second week of November[15].

The first of these is the Zouave on the extreme left of the painting. His drooping moustache, decorative frogs and loops and out-of-kilter *chechia* are reminiscent of the anonymous Zouave whom Van Gogh had painted in June (F423 reproduced on page 490, and F424).

But his round face and innocuous expression resemble those of sub-lieutenant Paul-Eugène Milliet of the 3rd company of Zouaves. Milliet was twenty-five, and a man whose ignorant love of art paled beside his love of women; he was a good friend of Van Gogh's, and had sat for his portrait (F473) in September, signalling his impatience with 'a nervous movement of the legs[16]'. Milliet was posted to Africa shortly after he had met Gauguin, leaving Arles on 1 November. Adding Milliet to the background of *Night Café* shortly after the latter's departure, Gauguin presumably sketched his face from memory, perhaps incorporating reminiscences of Van Gogh's paintings as he did so.

In the centre, a little out of scale compared to the other figures – but he stood two-metres tall[17] – is *facteur* Roulin, another great friend of Van Gogh's. He seems to have been drawn from life; at all events, none of the many portraits of him by Van Gogh show him in profile. Opportunities were not lacking for Gauguin to observe Rollin on the premises, since he was a regular who frequented cafés and was 'something of a drinker'. He lived around the corner, between the two railway bridges, at 10 rue du Mont-des-Cordes[18]. A loading foreman or postal storekeeper rather than postman [*facteur*], Roulin worked mainly at the railway station[19].

In Van Gogh's description, Joseph Étienne Roulin (1841-1903) was a 'Socratic type, no less Socratic for being a bit alcoholic', a 'fierce republican and socialist [who] argues well and knows lots of things', 'more interesting than many'; 'for all he's a poor fellow and a humble clerk [… he's] much esteemed here[20]'. He was also Van Gogh's best friend in Arles. As intuitive and understanding as Van Gogh himself, he came to his aid during the latter's breakdown, coming to the hospital to take him home and providing great moral support: 'Around me he is gravely silent or tender as an old soldier might be for a recruit. […] And that does one a lot of good when it comes from a man neither embittered nor sad nor perfect nor happy nor always irreproachably just. But so good-natured and so sensible and so moved and such a believer[21]'. Roulin's whole family posed for Van Gogh; his wife did the same for Gauguin (see *327*), who also recorded in his 1888-1890 sketchbook[22] the features of the baby Marcelle, who had been born that summer.



Facteur Roulin (in Tralbault, 1969).

The landlady ■ Unlike Van Gogh, who frequently complained that he lacked models, Gauguin was more canny, and five days after his arrival had 'already all but found his Arlésienne[23]'. Was this Mme Ginoux, the landlady of the Café de la Gare? At all events, she sat for both painters at once: Gauguin made a large drawing faithfully copied for the present work, and Van Gogh, slightly to his right, painted her portrait (F489).

The only sitting took place after a letter written to Bernard between 2 and 5 November, in which Van Gogh announced that Gauguin had begun the present work while deploring the fact that he himself never painted figures, and before a very slightly later letter in which he declared 'At last I have an Arlésienne, a figure (no. 30 canvas) dashed off in an hour[24]', though, by January 1889, this had fallen to three-quarters of an hour[25]. Mme Ginoux did not pose on her own premises, but in the little yellow house and during daylight hours. Van Gogh shows her sitting not in one of the café chairs, but in an upright wooden armchair of a kind that often appears in his works, for example in his portraits of Mme Roulin and in *Gauguin's Chair* (F499). More important, he portrays her as a visitor, with her gloves and parasol on the table in front of her. Coquiot has given us a description of the joyful atmosphere prevailing during this sitting[26]. Gauguin's sketchbook for these years contains a diagram of the right eye and eyebrow of the model[27].



Portrait of Madame Ginoux, drawing. San Francisco (California), The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, Memorial gift from Dr T. Edward and Tullah Hanley, Bradford, Pennsylvania.



V. Van Gogh: *Portrait of Mme Ginoux*, November 1889 (F489). Paris, Musée d'Orsay. Photo: Druet-Vizzavona.



Mme Ginoux (in Tralbault, 1969).

Marie Ginoux was born Marie Julien on 8 June 1848 in Arles, and was one day younger than Gauguin; both were then forty. She was very young when, on 2 February 1866, she married Joseph Michel Ginoux, who was twelve years her elder; he can be seen standing by the billiard table in Van Gogh's painting F463. They presided together over the Café de la Gare during the 1880s. Ginoux died in 1902, his wife on 2 August 1911, aged 63[28].

It is to the credit of the Ginoux that, even after Van Gogh's breakdown, they maintained good relations with him, at a time when the neighbourhood had turned against him and wanted him to leave: 'These people are my friends – of course this is also because one was and is their client', he wrote, when he was thinking of returning to the Café de la Gare for lack of anywhere else[29].

But the most direct witness we have of Mme Ginoux's personality remains Gauguin's drawing, with its undeniable charm, and Van Gogh's painting, in which this charm is combined with a warm heart, the two works together suggesting a very attractive personality. A photograph of Mme Ginoux much later in her life was published by Tralbaut[30], and suggests a very vivacious woman of remarkable presence of mind.

There is no equivalent here of the no-nonsense expression Mme Ginoux wears in her photograph (page 521). Instead, Gauguin seems to introduce a glimmer of seduction and perhaps a hint of humour, no doubt seeking to adapt his model to the slightly suspect atmosphere of the nocturnal scene he sought to represent.

Brothels ■ There can be no doubt that Mme Ginoux was a woman 'of excellent character'. Indeed, Arlésiennes were reputed for their beauty, and all of them wore the most irreproachable air, as Gauguin observed: 'The prostitute who goes by in the street is no less ladylike than the rest of them and looks as virginal as Juno[31]'. At all events, he found his model 'much too proper[32]' for this slightly shady scene from which he quickly distanced himself, remarking: 'Basically it's not my cup of tea and the low-life local colour doesn't suit me[33]'.

After all, the project was not, ultimately, of his own choosing; it was at Van Gogh's prompting that he had, shortly after his arrival, when looking around for subject matter, agreed to 'go and spend time hanging around in the brothels in order to study them[34]'.

Van Gogh's desire to go and paint in a brothel, expressed in numerous letters from June 1888 onward, had been set off by Bernard. He had been the first of the little group to work in bawdy-houses – though the subject had already been explored by Zola,



É. Bernard: *Brothel Scene*, drawing sent to Van Gogh. Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).

Maupassant, Degas and others – and between May and October, Bernard had sent Van Gogh several poems and drawings dealing with this subject[35].

Shy and short of money, Van Gogh was unwilling to venture into brothels by himself, and clearly preferred to await the arrival of a friend. His little study of a prostitute and pimp (F478), intended for Bernard, was done 'from memory[36]', and the subject of a brothel as such was replaced by that of the 'night café' (F463).

The three artists approached these subjects in completely different ways. Bernard, like the Naturalist writers, emphasised the low-life aspect (Gauguin assuredly knew these drawings), while for Van Gogh there was a quite different emotional and symbolic charge: 'I sought to express the fact that the café is a place where one can be ruined, go mad, commit crimes […] to express the shadowy power of the ginhouse'; 'I tried to use red and green to express these terrible human passions[37]'. There is none of this about Gauguin's 'reply' to his friend's work, where, instead of the tragic irradiation of the gas lamps, we are faced with a waft of blue smoke that moves lazily across the room, leading us to reflect, in Frèches-Thory's words, 'on the inanity of human passion[38]'.

Of course, Gauguin wanted to distinguish himself from Van Gogh, all the more so when borrowing a motif. And yet, strange as it may seem, the motif might have impressed Gauguin as coincident with his own most personal concerns of the time; even as he was painting his Arlésienne in her nocturnal setting, Gauguin was also imagining the fallen woman of *Human Misery*. And the profound reflection that underpins *Human Misery* is strikingly analogous to certain of Van Gogh's thoughts. Van Gogh firmly believed in the potential transfiguration inscribed in even the most degraded flesh: 'You tell Society she's disgusting because the whore makes us think of meat on the stall / […] Here it is, the meat on the stall; note how it can still, after all, be momentarily electrified by the stimulus of a love more unexpected and refined. Just as the sated caterpillar stops eating and walks along a wall instead of a cabbage leaf, this sated female can no longer love even should she try. She is searching, endlessly searching, does she even know for what? / […] Yet still she loves, so still she lives, no two ways about it, for all she is finished and dying as a terrestrial animal. Does the butterfly emerge? – The butterfly from that sated caterpillar […]. / Anyway, that's where I've got to in the matter of studies of old tarts. I'd also like to know just a little bit about the thing I am myself perhaps the larva of[39]'.

Such thoughts of fall and redemption might have found fertile ground in the present work. Instead, they form the burden of *Human Misery (317)*, a work Gauguin had probably long meditated. Dominated, like *Human Misery*, by the figure of a woman resting her



V. Van Gogh: *Portrait of Mme Ginoux* (F543), painted after Gauguin's drawing (page 521). Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

head on her hand, *Night Café* forms a pair with it, but quite lacks its gravity, and should probably be connected with the 'exercises' that Gauguin customarily painted shortly after his arrival in some new landscape (see *Haystack, 315*).

If so, it was an exercise arising from Van Gogh's preoccupations, and it was he who shortly afterwards produced a *coda* to this set of paintings. Gauguin had left his drawing of Mme Ginoux behind in Arles, and in early 1890, Van Gogh painted five pictures based on his friend's study: F540 to F543, plus one further picture now lost[40]. Gauguin saw one of these, F543, at Theo's house, and declared it 'very beautiful and very curious', adding 'I like it better than my drawing[41]'. Van Gogh made him a present of it: 'I'm absolutely delighted to hear that you like the Arlésienne portrait, which I based strictly on your drawing./ I tried to be faithful to your drawing, respectfully so but taking the liberty of interpreting the sober character and style of the drawing in question by the use of a colour. / It is a sort of synthesis of our Arlésienne, if you will; and since such things are quite rare, take it as a work by you and by me, as a summary of our months of work together[42]'.

A variant of the figure of Mme Ginoux, facing the other way, also appeared in *Public Garden (329)*.

[1] See Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 183, D).
[2] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 2-6 November 1888 (B19a).
[3] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 9-12 November 1888 (561).
[4] Gauguin to Émile Bernard (?), 2nd week of November 1888 (Merlhès 179, D).
[5] Pickvance, 1984 (D).
[6] Tralbaut, 1969, p. 220 (D).
[7] See *Self-Portrait (309)*, and Paul Gauguin: *Avant et après*, 1903 (D).
[8] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 6 August 1888 (518).
[9] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 18-24 September 1888 (B16, D) and 4 October 1888 (B19).
[10] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 8 September 1888 (533).
[11] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 4 October 1888 (B19).
[12] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 2-6 November 1888 (B19a), cited above.
[13] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 28-29 October 1888 (558).
[14] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 4 October 1888 (B19).
[15] Merlhès 179, 2nd week of November 1888 (D).
[16] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 26 September 1888 (541a).
[17] J.-N. Priou, 1955 (D).
[18] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 10 October 1888 (550) and 29 September 1888 (543).
[19] On Roulin, see especially Merlhès, 1984; Tralbaut, 1969, p. 233; Pickvance, 1985 (all D).
[20] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 4 August (B14); to Wilhelmine Van Gogh, 31 July (W5); to Theo Van Gogh, 31 July 1888 (516) and 30 January 1889 (575).
[21] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, April 1889 (583).
[22] Gauguin's sketchbook c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 55.
[23] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 27-28 October 1888 (558).
[24] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 5-6 November 1888 (559, D).
[25] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 22-23 January 1889 (573, D).
[26] Coquiot, 1923 (D).
[27] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 19.
[28] Pickvance, 1984 (D).
[29] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 1 or 2 May 1889 (589).
[30] Tralbaut, 1969, p. 268 (D).
[31] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, late October-early November 1888 – around the 4th? (Merlhès 176).
[32] See above, Gauguin to Bernard?, 2nd week of November 1888 (Merlhès 179).
[33] Gauguin to Bernard?, 2nd week of November 1888 (Merlhès 179).
[34] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 28 or 29 October 1888 (558).
[35] See Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard: 20 May (B5); 18 June (B7); 24 June (B9); 18-24 September (B16, D); 29 September (B17); 4 October (B19); to Theo Van Gogh, 9-12 November 1888 (561, D).
[36] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 4 October 1888 (B19) and to Theo Van Gogh, 9 October 1888 (548).
[37] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 8 and 9 September 1888 (533 and 534).
[38] Catalogue of the *Van Gogh* exhibition, Amsterdam and Otterlo, 1990, p. 246.
[39] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 24 June 1888 (B9).
[40] Catalogue of the *Van Gogh* exhibition, Amsterdam and Otterlo, 1990, p. 246.
[41] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, May-June 1890 (Cooper GAC 41, D).
[42] Vincent Van Gogh to Gauguin, 16 June 1890 (643).

Documents and bibliography:

Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 18-24 September 1888 (B16): 'For example, it's true that I have just done this study of the "Night café"; but that*, though it rents its rooms by the hour and from time to time you see a tart sitting there with her bloke, I was saying, I haven't yet been able to do a brothel as such, because it would cost me more than I have'.

Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 2-6 November 1888 (B19a): see above.

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 5-6 November 1888 (559): 'At the moment he has women in a vineyard on the go [*317*] […] Also a picture of the same night café that I painted too […] At last I have an Arlésienne, a figure (no. 30 canvas) dashed off in an hour [F489]'.

Gauguin to Émile Bernard (?), 2nd week of November 1888 (Merlhès 179): see above.

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 9-12 November 1888 (561): 'Gauguin has almost finished his Night Café'.

Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, c. 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 183): 'I have just handed a roll of canvases in to the parcel post [… among them] a night café'.

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 22-23 January 1889 (573): 'During your hasty visit did you see the portrait in black and yellow of Mme Ginoux [F489]. I painted that portrait in three quarters of an hour'.

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 29 April 1890 (629): 'For the portrait of the Arlésienne, you know I promised one copy to my friend Gauguin and you'll get it to him [F543]'.

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, May 1890 (632): 'It'd still be possible to do sittings with the model […] whose portrait based on Gauguin's drawing you've just received'.

Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, May-June 1890 (Cooper GAC 41): 'I saw the picture of Mme Ginoux [F543]. Very beautiful and very curious, I like it better than my drawing'.

Vincent Van Gogh to Gauguin, 16 June 1890 (643): see above.

Vollard to G. Frizeau, 19 February 1903 (sale, Marseille, auction house, 14 December 1986, no. 85): 'I can tell you in advance that I can't let the *Café* go for less than 600 f […]. You understand that if I pay young artists 3, 4 and 500 Frs a picture – if a man like Gauguin couldn't sell a VERY IMPORTANT work for 600 frs, things would be desperate indeed'.

Probably: Jacques Rivière à Alain-Fournier, 23 December 1906 [J.-F. Moueix, 1969, p. 400, below]: Rivière has seen a *Pont-Aven Bar* in the Frizeau collection.

Vollard Archives, G. Frizeau to Vollard, 1 June 1908: 'Our friends the Leblonds are leaving Paris. If they haven't made any decision about the exchange that you asked me for, please return Gauguin's "Café" – (unless you prefer to send me your picture and let me choose)'.

Vollard Archives, G. Frizeau to Vollard, 8 June 1908, on reception of a painting of *Cliffs* sent by Vollard: 'It's a beautiful thing; less simple and striking than "Café", and I think that on the financial side you haven't done too badly out of it'.

M. Denis: *Journal*, Paris, 1957, vol. II, pp. 100-101 (entries for January 1909): short commentary on the two *Night Café* pictures by Van Gogh and Gauguin, which Denis had seen at the home of Abramovich Morosov, 21 Prechistenka, Moscow.

[S. Makovski: 'French Artists in the I.A. Morosov Collection', *Apollon*, Moscow, 1912, pp. 15-20 (in Russian)].

G. Coquiot: *Vincent Van Gogh*, Paris, 1923, pp. 187-188: '[Together they organised] a set-up to force

Mme Ginoux to pose by inviting her for a coffee; and once Mme Ginoux had sat down, Vincent "dashed off", as he put it, the portrait in one hour! While Gauguin repeated: "Mme Ginoux, Mme Ginoux, your portrait will be placed in the Musée du Louvre, in Paris!"'
J.-N. Priou: 'Van Gogh et la famille Roulin', *Revue des P.T.T. de France*, May-June 1955, pp. 26-32 (reprinted in *Arts*, 31 August 1955).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 305 (repr.).
M.-E. Tralbaut: *Van Gogh. Le mal aimé*, Lausanne, 1969, pp. 230, 233, 268 (photos of the café, of Roulin and Mme Ginoux).
J.-F. Moueix: *Un amateur d'art éclairé à Bordeaux. Gabriel Frizeau* (doctoral thesis, Université de Bordeaux), 1969, pp. 400, 416.
V. Merlhès: *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, Paris, 1984, pp. 515-517, note 309 (on Roulin).
R. Pickvance: *Van Gogh in Arles*, New York, 1984, pp. 10 (map indicating the site of the café), 151-155, 223-225 (on Roulin), 206-208 (on Mme Ginoux).
Paul Gauguin [in Russian museums], Leningrad and Paris, 1988, republished in 1991, pp. 50-53 (repr., with an analysis by M. Bessonova).
V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, pp. 202-206 (on the assignation hotels and night cafés of Arles).

Exhibitions:

Said to have appeared in an exhibition entitled *Künstler aus Paris*, Berlin and elsewhere, 1906, no. 80.
Van Gogh in Arles, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1984, no. 123.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 57.
Paul Gauguin e l'avanguardia russa, Ferrara, Palazzo dei Diamanti, 1995, no. 1.

Provenance:

Sent by Gauguin to Boussod et Valadon around 22 November 1888: see Gauguin's letter of that date, D above.
Vollard, c. 1903: see letter, D above.
Bought from Vollard by Gabriel Frizeau, Bordeaux (probably acquired by him in 1903 – this was probably the picture that Rivière saw at Frizeau's home in 1906). In June 1908, it was again at Vollard's, Frizeau having presumably asked to change it. An exchange with the Leblond brothers having fallen through, Vollard himself sent him in exchange a picture of *Cliffs*: see letters, D above.
Bought from Vollard in 1908 by I.A. Morosov, Moscow.
Museum of Modern Western Art, Moscow, 1919.
Second Museum of Modern Western Art, Moscow, 1923.
Moscow, Pushkin Museum. 1948-3367.

319
Blue Trees

Canvas. 0.92 × 0.73
Signed and dated lower right:
P Gauguin. 88
W246 and W311

We have adopted the title noted by Gauguin on page 72 of his 1888-1890 sketchbook, rather than the strange title given on page 73 – *Your Turn Will Come, My Beauty!* – which is discussed below.
The work is painted on the coarse cloth of which Gauguin had bought twenty metres early in November (see *Les Alyscamps, 316*, inset). It is undoubtedly an attempt to replicate the striking impression made on Gauguin and Van Gogh while out walking on Sunday 4 November 1888: 'Sunday, if you'd been with us, we saw a red vineyard red like red wine. Beyond, in the distance, it was yellow and then a green sky with a sun the ground violet after rain glinting yellow here and there where the setting sun was reflected[1]'.
The desire to transcribe this extraordinary natural phenomenon found immediate expression in Van Gogh's *Red Vineyard* [F495], and in Gauguin's *Human Misery (317)*, which he finished around 9-12 November 1888; the present work is presumably slightly later.



V. Van Gogh: *Red Vineyard* (F495). Moscow, Pushkin Museum.

But in *Human Misery*, Gauguin had effectively reduced that spectacle to an idea. Here he sought to render the magical instant, and *Blue Trees* thus forms a sort of counterpart to Van Gogh's *Red Vineyard*. Both works must have been painted 'from the head' (see *Human Misery*, inset), but whereas Van Gogh painted from memory and undoubtedly remained very faithful to what he had seen, Gauguin may have invented everything in this scene, which reverses the arrangement of Van Gogh's picture.
Yet the subject is the same. Van Gogh shows us the light of the setting sun, dazzling but pocked with darkness, while Gauguin evokes the infinite depths of the universe as they disappear over a horizon itself afloat above a world engulfed in shadow. This overtly and profoundly poetical subject is concordant with certain strains of Symbolism, and as such more unexpected, perhaps, in Gauguin's hands than in those of the romantic Van Gogh.

Tree trunks ■ The rhythm Gauguin incised into this infinite spread of shadowy molten light comes from a screen of smoke-blue tree trunks whose upper reaches extend beyond our field of vision, while the foreground in which he placed them is animated by human figures and exhibits much more earth-bound colours.
Tree trunks creating vertical rhythms or screens was nothing new: Cézanne, Seurat and Gauguin himself had already made use of them (see *Two Women Bathing, 241*, inset). But two particularly modern applications of this device had just appeared in Gauguin's immediate vicinity. The most recent of these, Van Gogh's paintings F486 and F487, featured bluish ranks of Lombardy poplars silhouetted against the orange-tinged soil of the avenue of les Alyscamps; Gauguin had known these works since early November; they hung in his room in Arles, and we know that he liked them[2]. Somewhat earlier, he had seen the squadrons of receding trees in the background of Bernard's *Madeleine in the Bois d'Amour* (Luthi 140) and *Walking in the Bois d'Amour* (Luthi 48, dated 1887, though one wonders if it is not perhaps from 1888). The latter in particular is very similar to *Blue Trees* in its portrait format, foreground declivity and little human figures.
Though these works very likely played a role in suggesting the vertical effect of the trunks



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É. Bernard: *Walk in the Bois d'Amour* (Luthi 48). Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



A. Hiroshige: *View from the Temple at Kanda at Sunrise*, 1857. Saint Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental Maurice Denis 'Le Prieuré'.

in *Blue Trees*, it should be remembered that the influences that inhabit them are not the same. The decorative poplar screens of Van Gogh's *Alyscamps* paintings were no doubt inspired by Japanese prints, whereas Bernard's *Bois d'Amour* works may well derive, as Walter suggests, from Symbolist works such as Max Klinger's *Spring* (an engraving in the collection of the Leipzig Museum) or Puvis de Chavannes's *Sacred Wood*[3].

There can be little doubt that the trunks in *Blue Trees* are more in the line of Japanese screen than sacred wood. The catalogue of the 1984 *Gauguin* exhibition at the Musée du Prieuré[4] reproduces a Hiroshige print – *View from the Temple at Kanda at Sunrise* – in which the infinite distance is similarly barred by the



V. Van Gogh: *Les Alyscamps* (F487). Collection and photo: Stavros S. Niarchos.

verticals of the tree trunks. No direct influence can be proven, but the analogy is a significant one. As to Bernard's plantations, they were soon to acquire a multitude of fellows in the many woods sacred and secular painted by the Nabis; the catalogue of the Musée du Prieuré exhibition reproduces a veritable collection of this 1890s cliché.

The poetic coloration of these vertical bands makes the connection between the subtle nuances of the background and the contrasting foreground, which is all firmly delineated areas of flat opaque colour, though the orange may be intended as a reflection of the setting sun.

Yellow skies ■ The yellow sky in this work is justified by the subject as it was in *Human Misery* and *Red Vineyard*, but was relatively new in Gauguin. It echoes those that Van Gogh had painted in a number of recent works: *Sower*, which dated from June (F422, see page 437), and *Les Alyscamps* (F487) and *Old Yew* (F573, whose colours are not whol-



V. Van Gogh: *Trunk of an Old Yew*, 27-28 October 1888 (F573). Photo: Christie's.

Harmonic Colour, Musical Colour

Harmonics and modulations ■ Gauguin's palette in *Blue Trees* is not so very different from the one he had used shortly before in *Les Alyscamps (316)*: the organisation of colour – contrasting yellow and ultramarine, red and green, blue and orange and even black and white – still relies on the paired complementaries extolled by Van Gogh (see *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset).

The orchestration of these colours nevertheless produces a quite different overall effect. Here, more than ever, Gauguin's colours sing.

A simple contrast is registered in the self-portrait *Les Misérables (309)* between Prussian blue and its yellow-orange background. Compare that with the sky here in *Blue Trees*, its gold exalted by the neighbouring ochre, orange, red, and even green, all of these contrasting with infinitely nuanced blue-greys; it is immediately clear how carefully Gauguin is now preparing the passage from one colour to another by a series of expressive modulations. Here he develops a system of subtle resonances, in which the proficient juxtaposition of tones produces an intangible but powerful set of overtones, the harmonics of a highly evocative system.

This procedure seemed to Gauguin full of promise, and he soon began to contrast it with the complementary system, which 'creates clashes not harmony', as he later said[1]. From this he deduced a 'law of derived colours' whose praises he later sang to his pupils. Seguin, in particular, records a lesson about the sun setting over the sea, in which ochre, orange, red and violet were intended to produce a lyric harmony: 'the tones would bond […] lovingly, through mysterious affinities[2]'.

True, the simultaneous use of a number of complementaries, as used by Van Gogh in particular, had opened up a spectrum of possibilities and paved the way for this system. We should also note that, in particular in Martinique, Gauguin had already attempted the use of subtly mixed poetic colours, which, though less intense, bordered on modulation. Moreover, the subtle and profound colours of the print by Toyokuni III (see page 362) are not wholly unrelated to these harmonies. On the other hand, we do not know when Gauguin acquired it.

Gauguin later claimed to have taught these principles to Van Gogh, who was 'floundering'; he 'always proceeded by major contrasts of tone on a single complementary […] following my advice and teaching, he […] did yellow sunflowers on a yellow background, etc.



V. Van Gogh: *Fourteen Sunflowers in a Vase* (F454). London, National Gallery.

learnt the orchestration of a pure tone by all the tones derived from it[3]'.

In fact, Van Gogh preceded Gauguin in this respect, most notably in these very same sunflowers, which were certainly completed before Gauguin's arrival. A yellow-on-yellow-background sunflower painting (almost certainly F454) so impressed Gauguin that he later asked Van Gogh to give it to him, and he himself began making experiments in a similar fashion (see the portrait of Van Gogh, *326*, 'Suns', and *Little Cat, 321*, entry and inset). In 1894 he spoke of this work with obvious emotion: 'In my yellow room, – sun flowers, with purple eyes, stood out on a yellow background, their stems watered from a yellow pot on a yellow table, – In one corner of the picture, the signature of the painter: Vincent. And yellow sunlight came through the yellow curtains of my room, and flooded all these flower-heads with gold[4]'.

Profound vibrations ■ Gauguin's boast that he had invented this system was untrue, but his development of it was far-reaching. For Gauguin and Van Gogh were both intensely sensitive to colour and both sought to render it as evocative as possible (see the self portrait *Les Misérables, 309*, inset). Both of them felt that it acted directly on the soul. Speaking of a projected decoration scheme involving sunflowers, in which 'pure and mixed chromes would burst forth from various backgrounds, blues from the palest Veronese to royal blue, framed by slender battens painted lead orange[5]', Van Gogh said he wanted 'Gothic stained-glass-window sorts of effects'. Another form of research was 'exaggerated studies' like the *Sower* or *Night Café*, 'because', he said, 'when I'm all worked up about something, […] they're the only ones that seem to me have a graver sense[6]'. Thus the vibratory intensity of colour has a direct bearing on feeling.

The areas of the self affected by colour were, in Gauguin's view, wider still, and included emotions, poetic impressions, and even dream – thus making it the perfect instrument of Symbolist suggestion. Ten years later, attempting to summarize his ideas on this subject, he exclaimed 'Colour! So profound and mysterious a language, the language of dream'. Citing a piece by the critic Delaroche that he had greatly admired, he emphasised 'the suggestive power [of colour…], particularly apt to give wings to the imagination, decorating our dreams, and opening a new portal onto the infinite and mysterious'. 'Since colour is enigmatic in the sensations that it imparts, logically one can make only enigmatic use of it […]. Colour, which is – like music – vibration, reaches that which is most general and thus most vague in [one's] nature: one's inner vitality[7]'. To illustrate this explanation, Gauguin refers his reader to oriental carpets (see inset); but he also speaks of 'a tree trunk of local colour, grey-blue, [which] becomes pure blue[8]'. This allusion obviously reminds us of *Blue Trees*; he was clearly aware that with this work he had taken a decisive step.

'Music before all else' ■ Van Gogh and Gauguin both relied on the same logic, that of the intrinsic expressiveness of the formal elements of art; this was a subject of increasing interest to painters (see *Fruit, 312*, inset on 'A "Symbolic" Language of Form'). Both compared the action of colour with that of music, the most inward and least discursive of artistic forms. As early as the mid-1880s, Gauguin noted that 'like music, [painting] acts on the soul via the senses; harmonious tones correspond to the harmonies of sound[9]'. Van Gogh frequently used the same analogy: 'By making play with all these [bright] colours, one can create calm and harmony. And something occurs analogous to what happens with Wagner's music, which, even when executed by a full orchestra, remains nonetheless intimate in effect[10]'. Or again: 'I don't know you if you understand that one can speak poetry merely by arranging colours properly, just as one can say consoling things in music[11]'. As for Gauguin, he confessed, 'If I go to a concert to hear a Beethoven quartet, I come out with coloured images vibrating in the depths of my being[12]'.



V. Van Gogh: *Sower at Sunset*, November 1888 (F450). Zurich, Fondation collection E.G. Bührle.

The inwardness to which the Symbolist period was returning motivated these reflections. A profound need was felt for subjects touching on the life of the soul. Essential to this was the intuitive perception of 'correspondences', a notion highlighted by Symbolism (but which also played its part in Synthetism: see *Vision, 308*, inset on Synthetism, 'Synthetism and Symbolism confused'). This no doubt explains the musicality then pervading many of the arts (see *Fruit, 312*, inset on 'A "Symbolic" Language of Form').

The late nineteenth century entertained a powerful belief in the commonality of the arts. With the 'green azures' of Rimbaud's *Bateau ivre*, literature sought to paint, while the mysterious play of light in *Blue Trees* or Van Gogh's *Sower* (F450 and 451, November 1888) might find their equivalent in some Debussy-like modulation.

'The painter of the future is a colourist such as there has never yet been', Van Gogh predicted that spring[13]. Gauguin too seems to have considered his colour innovations essential, since he termed this new art not merely 'Orphic art' but 'a movement of painting by colour[14]'.

[1] C. Chassé: *Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven*, Paris, 1921, p. 85; see also *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset on complementaries.
[2] A. Seguin: 'Paul Gauguin', *L'Occident*, April 1903, pp. 232-233.
[3] Gauguin to Fontainas, September 1902 (Malingue CLXXVI), and Paul Gauguin: *Avant et après*, pp. 11-12.
[4] Paul Gauguin: 'Natures mortes', *Essais d'art libre*, January 1894, p. 273.
[5] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 18 August 1888 (B15).
[6] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 11-12 September 1888 (535).
[7] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, pp. 220 and 263 ff.
[8] *Diverses choses*, p. 265/3
[9] Paul Gauguin: *Notes synthétiques*, sketchbook of 1884-1886 (Cogniat-Rewald, 1962), pp. 2-12.
[10] Vincent to Wilhelmine Van Gogh; 30 March 1888 (W3).
[11] Vincent to Wilhelmine Van Gogh, mid-November 1888 (W8).
[12] *Diverses choses*, p. 263.
[13] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 4 May 1888 (482).
[14] *Diverses choses*, pp. 265-266 and 7.

The 'Immense Oriental Carpet'

In his effort to summarise his ideas on colour, Gauguin revealed a line of descent for this new art that is much less often cited than the Japanese influence. He compared the 'luminous strength' he sought to that of an 'immense oriental carpet'. 'Orientals, ancient Persians and others had all printed a complete dictionary of this language of the listening eye; they vested their carpets with a marvellous eloquence. O painters demanding a technique of colour, study carpets, there you will find all that is known[1].'
And one can easily imagine that oriental carpets did indeed develop the taste of enlightened art-lovers. One such was Edmond de Goncourt, who, having 'learnt from Bracquemond that the Bon Marché had received a consignment […] including some old Persian carpets', was deeply impressed at the sight of them: 'Before these frosted and glittering surfaces […] this welter of colours, one penetrating another […] these yellows which have the paleness of green gold, these pinks which are like the pink of strawberries mashed in cream, before these blues, these greens which are so unlike the blues and greens of the West […] I feel myself overtaken by a picture-collector's passion for these carpets…[2].'
The art of carpet-making formed one of the 'primitive' arts that were exerting such a powerful attraction at the time (see *Vision, 308*, inset on 'Other civilisations'), and it may be that the 'paper' that Gauguin circulated in his entourage (see *Clovis, 208*, inset) owed something to his interest in it, though this remains unproven. As to his autumn 1888 allusion to Persian carpets, made to justify the 'abstract' and 'symbolic' treatment of his self-portrait *Les Misérables* (see *309*, especially the inset, 'Ancient or Islamic Persian'), it seems to suggest that it was not just the colours of Oriental carpets that attracted him, but their decorative surface and highly simplified draughtsmanship. Gauguin bought at least one such Persian carpet; he took it with him when he left for Tahiti, and mentions it in a letter to De Monfreid of November 1895[3].

[1] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 265/2-4.
[2] E. de Goncourt, *Journal*, 21 November 1874.
[3] *Lettres de Gauguin à Daniel de Monfreid*, Paris, 1950, no. XX.

ly unrelated to those of *Blue Trees*). The last two were both painted after Gauguin's arrival. True, Puvis de Chavannes had already bestowed poetic yellow skies on his *Sweet Country* and *Sacred Wood*.

The couple ■ The size and position of the figures here mark them out as unusual in Gauguin's work. They are a clear reminiscence of the lovers with whom the solitary Van Gogh liked to people his landscapes: examples can be seen contemplating the *Starry Night over the Rhône* (F474), wandering through the *Poet's Garden* (F479, F485) or walking along les Alyscamps (F487).
It is conceivable that, in deliberately avoiding any sense of sentimental harmony, Gauguin was attempting to differentiate himself from Van Gogh. The two figures, symbolically separated by a tree (whose role here is not unlike that of the slender trunk in *Two Women Bathing, 241*), are clearly at odds. The woman – who wears the Arles costume – turns away from the man, perhaps in fear, while he, overbearingly macho, accosts her with the words 'Your turn will come, my beauty!' His words are known to us because this was the title Gauguin chose when exhibiting the work at Les Vingt in February 1889. The title is surprising, and its cynicism ill-attuned to the beauty of the landscape. Was Gauguin attempting to temper the lyricism of the work? Or had he been rejected by the women of Arles, in which case this phrase – like the 'spinsters' of *329* – might register his resentment? It may also be that, seeking a title for the work's appearance at Les Vingt, Gauguin conferred this one almost as a joke.



V. Van Gogh: *Poet's Garden III* (F479).
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Far-reaching experiment ■ Gauguin's preoccupations of the moment had found expression in *Human Misery*, and the present work is more experimental in kind, testing the power of colour to create atmosphere. It is striking to compare certain of the works Gauguin painted alongside Bernard – near monochrome experiments, their forms brutally outlined – with this glowing landscape. The result of his collaboration with Van Gogh, it led Gauguin to the borders of a dream world which comes closest to the Symbolist sensibility. The changes adumbrated here were to prove far-reaching ones (see inset on musical colour).
Roskill notes that the lower part of this work appears on the wall of the studio in the *Portrait of Madame Roulin (327)*[5].

[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 5-6 November 1888 (559).
[2] See Gauguin to Émile Bernard, 2-5 November (Merlhès 177), and Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 5-6 November 1888 (559).
[3] É. Walter: '*Madeleine au bois d'amour* by Émile Bernard', *Revue du Louvre et des musées de France*, 1978, p. 288.
[4] Catalogue of the *Gauguin* exhibition, Musée du Prieuré de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1984, p. 70.
[5] Roskill, 1970 (**D**).

Documents and bibliography:

Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), pp. 72-73: preparatory lists for the exhibition of Les Vingt: p. 72, Gauguin has not chosen among his Arles works and gives a long list of them, including *Blue Trees*; p. 73, he has decided in favour of *Blue Trees* – '[no.] 12 Your turn will come, my beauty [FF] 500'.
List of the latest prices asked for the works due to appear at Les Vingt in February 1889, sent to O. Maus before the exhibition (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): Gauguin wants FF 500 for this work.
Blue Trees was certainly one of the works that elicited the following (anonymous) critique featured as 'Théatres et beaux-arts. Bruxelles, le Salon des Vingt', in *L'Indépendance belge*, 4 February 1889, p. 3: 'Stranger again are the paintings by Monsieur Gauguin, from Arles, which apply certain procedures from Japanese art to European and contemporary subjects, so that one really cannot tell what one is seeing'.
O. Maus: 'Le Salon des XX, à Bruxelles', *La Cravache*, 2 March 1889, p. 1: 'On the evidence that a landscape shows blue tree trunks and yellow sky, it is generally concluded that Monsieur Gauguin has not the slightest notion of colour […]. I humbly confess my sincere admiration for Monsieur Gauguin, one of the most exquisite colourists I know'.
Review of the Danish exhibition of 1893 [in H. Rostrup: 'Gauguin et le Danemark', *GBA*, special Gauguin number, January-April 1956 (published 1958), pp. 80-81]: 'indigo poles in beaten egg-yolk'.
Perhaps: Vollard Archives, Vollard to Miethke, 6 March 1907: 'Please find below the net prices of the pictures that I sent you for sale or return […] Gauguin Arles Landscape 1800 F'; this might equally refer to *315*.
Probably: Vollard Archives, 1908 diary, entry for 28 October: 'Returned to Monsieur Moll the 2 Gauguin pictures he had entrusted me with'. Moll had perhaps asked Vollard to find a buyer for them.
Wildenstein, 1964, nos. 246 and 311 (repr.).
W. Roskill: *Van Gogh, Gauguin and the Impressionist Circle*, London, 1970, pp. 149, 150, 154, 156, pl. 138.
V. Jirat-Wasiutynski: *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1975); microfilm version, 1993, pp. 158, 216, 220.

Exhibitions:

6e exposition des XX, Bruxelles, Musée royal de Peinture, February 1889, no. 12 (*Your Turn Will Come, My Beauty!*); see Maus review, **D** above.
Den Frie Udstilling, Copenhagen, Free Exhibitions Building, 1893, no. 157 (*Landscape at Sunset*); see review, **D** above; a copy of the catalogue in the collection of the Statens Museum for Kunst carries the manuscript note 'arbres bleus [blue trees]'.
Perhaps: Vienna, Miethke, March-April 1907, no. 56 (*Landscape, Arles*, for sale). The picture seems to have been sent by Vollard to Miethke (see Vollard letter, **D** above. But this might equally refer to *315*.
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1948, no. 36.
Gauguin og Van Gogh i København i 1893, Charlottenlund, Ordrupgaard, 1984, no. 29.
Washington D.C., Chicago, and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 60.
Gauguin, les XX and La Libre Esthétique, Liège, Salle Saint-Georges, 1994-1995, no. 18.
Martigny, Fondation P. Gianadda, 1998, no. 42.

Provenance:

Mette Gauguin, Copenhagen, c. 1893.
Carl Moll, Vienna.
May have been deposited for sale by Moll with Vollard, see 1908 Vollard diary, **D** above.
In any case: bought from Moll by Bernheim-Jeune, 31 October 1908 (document 16885).
Sold by Bernheim-Jeune to Alphonse Kahn, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 4 November 1908.
Bought from A. Kahn through Barbazanges by a Danish 'konsortium' for Wilhelm Hansen, Ordrupgaard, in 1918.
Charlottenlund (Denmark), Ordrupgaard.

320
Woman with Pigs or The Heat of the Day

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.92
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W301



Woman Seen from Behind, study. Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).



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The title we have adopted is close to the one that the painting bore in the 1891 sale; like all Gauguin's letters immediately following the completion of the work, this title mentions the pigs. When the work was exhibited at Les Vingt in 1889, an exhibition for which Gauguin conjured up some particularly vivid titles, he called it *The Heat of the Day*[1], and more recently it has also been entitled *In the Hay*. 'Gauguin is working on a very original nude woman in the hay with pigs. It promises to be very beautiful and stylistically rather grand', Van Gogh told Theo between 12 and 16 November[2]. The work was begun in mid-November and finished a week later; on 22 November, Gauguin informed Theo that he was sending off '*Pig*[3]'. Painted on the thick jute that Gauguin had bought on his arrival (see *Les Alyscamps*, *316*, inset), this work, like *Human Misery*, was intended to be fairly 'coarse'; Van Gogh noted that parts of the painting were very rich in paint, bordering on the impasto that he himself favoured, and that Gauguin had at times worked the paint with a palette-knife[4]. The painting is composed of large areas outlined without emphasis and slightly modulated 'with almost imperceptible colour divisions in an attempt to create a grand vision of things'[5]. The general effect is 'synthetic' in respect of its extremely decorative coloured surface rather than its draughtsmanship, which is barely if at all stylised; it is, in fact, the faithful transcription of a large charcoal study (with watercolour highlights) of a woman seen from behind. Gauguin probably gave this study to Van Gogh, since it now forms part of the collection of the Van Gogh Museum. A pig summarily drafted into Gauguin's 1888-1890 sketchbook may also have been used[6].

A previous acquaintance ■ The charcoal nude undoubtedly dates from Gauguin's stay in Pont-Aven, since the model's *coiffe* is clearly not Arlésien. At first glance, it might seem to be a Le Pouldu coiffe, which would be surprising, given that Gauguin made only brief and almost touristic expeditions to the Le Pouldu area (see the views of Portguerrec, *303*, and Porsac'h, *310*), and it is hard to see how he could, under those circumstances, have found a native willing to pose nude or, had he done so, arranged a sitting. But could not the bonnet we see be the reverse of that so negligently worn by the Pont-Avennoise of *293*? The woman portrayed in *293* is, in our view, the promiscuous Breton woman who posed for Gauguin, probably one Marie Louarn, of whom Sérusier remarked that 'she did not scruple to remove her slip, but showed a respectable reluctance to remove her *coiffe*' (see *293*)[7]. She is a vital presence in Gauguin's work; the seed that she had planted in his imagination germinated in *Fruit (312)*, re-emerging in this November 1888 as the 'Magdalene' figure of *Human Misery (317)*.

Woman, *recto* and *verso* ■ Dorra has compared this nude back with that of a Rops etching on the lower part of a heliogravure reproduction of his own lithograph *Marie-Josèphe* (Exteens 528); he also suggests that *Marie-Josèphe* herself inspired the heroine of *Human Misery* (see *317*, 'Fallen Woman')[8]. The existence of Gauguin's charcoal study for *Woman*



F. Rops: *Li Sotte Marie-Josèphe*. Etching on heliogravure, in M. Exteens. Photo © Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie Jacques Doucet, Paris.

with Pigs tends to undermine this very striking hypothesis, in particular since it shows that the apparently clasped fingers of the present work are not taken from the etching but from the Pont-Avennoise in the study, where she held on to an upright during the sitting. Thus, even supposing that Gauguin did know the engraving of *Marie-Josèphe*, either in Pont-Aven or in Arles, it can only have provided a further ingredient in his reflection on certain problems (see *317*). But rather as the Rops etching seems to offer two aspects of the same figure, so the lost soul facing the spectator in *Human Misery* and the exposed back of the present work seem to belong to the same personage. The two works are in any case bracketed in a number of Gauguin and Van Gogh's letters[9], for example, when Gauguin notes that both are 'rather virile […] a little coarse', adding, 'is it the heat of the south that makes us so ruttish?[10]', thus to some extent bracketing them in point of meaning. And this is clear enough: the title *Cochons [Pigs]*, in the same letter and in Gauguin's 1888-1890 sketchbook[11], like that selected for the exhibition of Les Vingt (*The Heat of the Day [On Heat]*), leaves us in no doubt about the sexual symbolism of the present work[12]. As Jirat-Wasiutynski says, *Woman with Pigs* is like a footnote confirming the sexual overtones of *Human Misery*'s central protagonist[13]. Gauguin's considerations on sexuality had first found expression the year before in *Two Women Bathing (241)*, where female nudity is again juxtaposed with a pig. The same line of thought is clearly developed in this sensual figure, which belongs to a long tradition of carnal nudes, from Rembrandt's *Bathsheba* to Gauguin's own 'Suzanne' (*64*, 1880). Notable within this tradition are the slave-girl in Delacroix' *Death of Sardanapalus*[14], who poses in very similar fashion, and certain Degas pieces – Gauguin had even made a sketch after a woman in a rather similar posture during the *Degas* exhibition of early 1888[15].

Clear allusions ■ Having carefully transcribed his study onto the canvas, Gauguin created around her an environment of astonishing colour and movement; intensely evocative, it was done entirely *de tête* (see *Human Misery*, *317*, inset on this method). Poetic refinement is married with rich sensuality as the subtle combination of related tones enhances the few basic complementaries (see *Blue Trees*, *319*, inset on the harmonic system). Gauguin's colours bring to mind one of Van



E. Delacroix: *Death of Sardanapalus* (Robaut 198), detail. Paris, Musée du Louvre. Photo: RMN.

Gogh's *dicta*, when comparing modern painting to that of the Dutch masters, and Rembrandt in particular: 'we work on and argue about colour where they talked about *chiaroscuro* and [tone] values[16]'. Clearly, the swelling masses of hay evoke the waves in which Gauguin's women bathers disport themselves, and foreshadow the white horses breaking over the following year's *Ondine* (W336), who is in fairly direct line of descent from the woman here; *Ondine* in her turn bore a numerous progeny of figures painted, sculpted and engraved[17]. But perhaps the most astonishing aspect of this painting is the dislocated right leg that Gauguin has bestowed on his Breton model (it is not found in the charcoal study). Her pointed clog is symbolically aimed at the hindquarters of the pig disappearing behind the haystack, in the background. Scarcely less astonishing is the way in which this tempting and surrendered body terminates in a hand red as though dipped in blood; this raw skin-colour may simply record a tan acquired by working in the fields, though it is reminiscent of a stylised shadow-effect that we have already seen in *Young Breton Bathers (297)*. And finally, attention should be drawn to the flowing red of the striped apron, against which Gauguin has placed a pitchfork. Certain of Gauguin's previous representations of the naked body had sounded a slightly melancholy note (see *Wrestlers*, *298*, inset). There is no sign of that here. Like the pigs, the crude allusions are discreetly blended into the sumptuously-painted whole, no doubt thus expressing Gauguin's lucid awareness of the nature and implications of this wanton surrender.

[1] Gauguin's title, *En Pleine Chaleur*, puns on '*In* the full heat [of the day]', and '*On* [full] heat' [Translator's note].
[2] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 12-16 November 1888 (562).
[3] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 183, D). See also *Human Misery*.
[4] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 20-22 November 1888 (563, see *Human Misery, 317*, D).
[5] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 184, D).
[6] Gauguin's sketchbook c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 83.
[7] Letter from Sérusier to Maurice Denis, 10 November 1906 (M. Denis: *Journal*, Paris, 1957, vol. II, pp. 48-49).
[8] Dorra, 1978 (**D**).
[9] See 562, Merlhès 183 and 184 (**D**).
[10] Merlhès 183, c. 22 November 1888 (**D**).
[11] Huyghe, 1952, p. 72 (**D**).
[12] The adjective *cochon* can mean 'disgusting', 'licentious' or 'pornographic'; *cochonneries* are obscene words or acts [Translator's note].
[13] Jirat-Wasiutynski, 1975 (**D**).
[14] Delacroix' *The Death of Sardanapalus* is in the collection of the Musée du Louvre.
[15] Album Briant, p. 6.
[16] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 4 August 1888 (B14).
[17] For a list of these, see Cachin, 1979 (**D**).

Documents and bibliography:

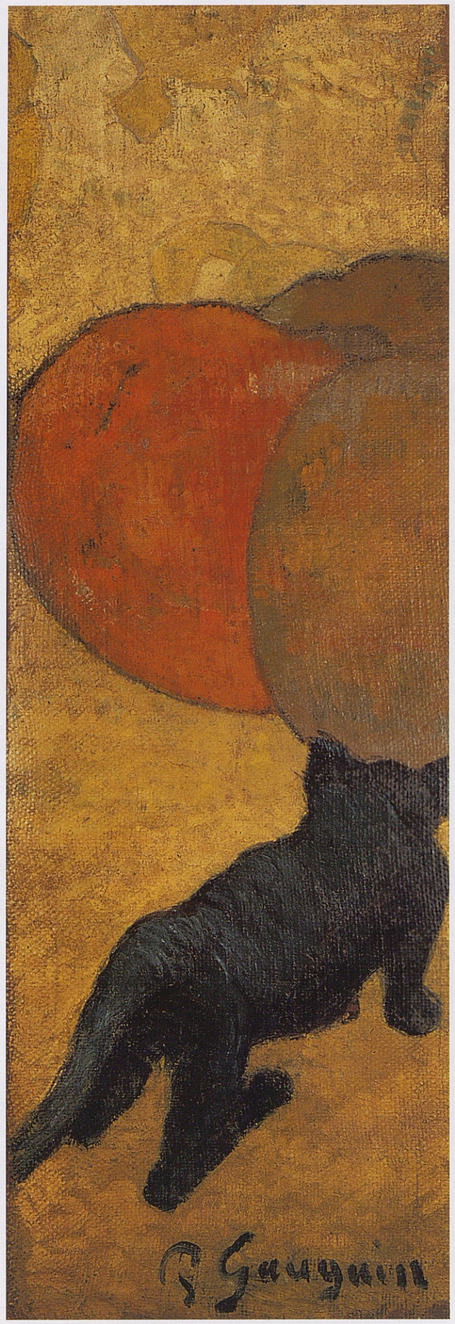
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 12-16 November 1888 (562): see above.
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 20-22 November (563): 'The two he's about to send you are miles better [than *Round Dance of the Breton Girls, 296*]. / I mean Women Grape-Pickers and Woman with Pigs'. For other passages of this letter, see *Human Misery, 317*, **D**.
Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, c. 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 183): 'I have just handed a roll of canvases in to the parcel post […]'. Cf. *Human Misery, 317*, **D**.
Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 184): 'I've just sent [Theo] Van Gogh two pictures that I urge you to go and see. It's something else again, simply painted on coarse cloth in thick oils with almost imperceptible colour divisions in an attempt to create a grand vision of things – I think these two canvases superior to the others – When you have a moment, write at length and give me your critical impressions of all that'.
Émile Schuffenecker to Gauguin, 11 December 1888 (Merlhès CI): 'On Saturday I went to Goupil to see your latest pictures. I was really thrilled'. See *Human Misery, 317*, **D** for a fuller extract.
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), pp. 72-73, preparatory list of the paintings that Gauguin was planning in February 1889 to send to the exhibition of Les XX; p. 72: '[no.] 30 [canvas] Pigs'; p. 73, definitive list: '[no.] 8 The Heat of the Day [FF] 1000'.
List sent to O. Maus in late 1888, giving the prices asked for the works to be exhibited at les XX (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): Gauguin wanted FF 1,000 for this work, equalling the price of the *Vision (308)* but below that of *Human Misery (317)*.
Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): among the no. 30 canvases, 'Woman, naked back, with pigs [valued FF] 400'.
J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Vollard Archives, 1904 inventory: '3506 [provenance] Bernheim-Jeune Naked woman with pig. C.[canvas]: 73 × 92. [FF] 300'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 301 (repr.).
V. Jirat-Wasiutynski: *Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1975), microfilm version, 1993, pp. 222-224, 233-234, 251.
H. Dorra: 'Paul Gauguin's Dramatic Arles Themes', *Art Journal*, Autumn 1978, pp. 14-15 (repr.).
F. Cachin: 'Un bois de Gauguin. *Soyez mystérieuses*', *La Revue du Louvre et des musées de France*, 1979, no. 3, pp. 216-217.

Exhibitions:

Shown at Boussod et Valadon, Paris, late November-December 1888 (Schuffenecker's letter saying that he has been to see the picture is dated 11 December, see **D** above).
6e exposition des XX, Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, February 1889, no. 8 (*The Heat of the Day*).
Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
(?) Weimar, Grossherzogliches Museum für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe, July-September 1905, no. 12: *Torso of a Breton Woman* (in P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven…*, Sigmaringen, 1997, pp. 24-27).
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1906, no. 183 (*Breton Woman with Naked Torso*).
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 34 or 38 depending on the edition.
Paris, galerie Le Portique, 1931, no. 23.
Gauguin et ses amis, Paris, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1934, no. 51.
Paris, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1936, no. 30.
G.-D. de Monfreid et son ami Gauguin, Paris, Charpentier, 1938, no. 152 (*Breton Woman in the Hay*).
Gauguin et ses amis, Paris, André Weil, 1951, no. 4.
Collection G.-D. de Monfreid, Paris, Musée national d'Art moderne, 1951, no. 3.
Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group, London, Tate Gallery, 1966, no. 16.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1966, no. 15.
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1978, no number.
Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Toronto (Ontario), Art Gallery of Ontario, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, 1981, no. 57A.
Gauguin, les XX et La Libre Esthétique, Liège, Salle Saint-Georges, 1994-1995, no. 16.

Provenance:

Sent by Gauguin to Boussod et Valadon on 22 November 1888, on deposit for sale.
Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 9 in the catalogue and no. 10 in the auctioneer's book: *Study, Woman and Pigs*, 250 F to Monsieur Alfred Natanson, 85 rue Jouffroy [Paris]. (Natanson also bought *Wrestlers, 298*, at the same sale).
Bought from Bernheim-Jeune by Vollard; the painting appears in the 1904 inventory (**D** above) but not in that of 1899, and may therefore have been acquired between these two dates.
Georges-Daniel de Monfreid, Béziers, c. 1906.
Henri de Monfreid, Béziers, c. 1931.
Mme Huc de Monfreid, Béziers.
Stavros S. Niarchos, c. 1955.
Private collection.



321

321
Little Cat

Canvas. 0.72 × 0.24
Signed lower right: *P Gauguin*
W294

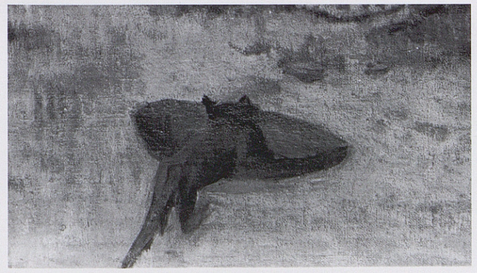
Painted on the coarse canvas that Gauguin bought on his arrival in Arles (see *Les Alyscamps, 316*), this work resembles *Little Dogs (311)* in its naïve subject and its damask-like background; it is, in short, the Arles-born sister of that Pont-Aven work, though it by no means forms a pair with it.
It is just as experimental and even more 'Japanese' than *Little Dogs*, which it resembles in its decorative verticality and the upright format that foreshadows the Nabi paintings and posters of the following decade. But here, in addition, we find a golden background reminiscent of Japanese folding screens, on which the central vegetables shine out like Chinese lanterns, in forms more simplified than ever.
Does the unusual format suggest that Gauguin deliberately sought inspiration in Japanese screens? If so, it was a decorative exercise that he did not repeat, and is hard to place within the internal logic of Gauguin's production in Arles. But there may, as we shall see, be a different explanation for this format.
The blue-tinged monochrome and thick outlines of *Little Dogs* are very much in Bernard's manner, and are replaced here by the warm, luminous colours that Gauguin had discovered at Van Gogh's side. The latter's devotion to yellow has left its mark, and Gauguin's background, gold patterned with pale straw colours, complemented by ochre and vermilion, comes close to a system of 'secondaries' (see *Blue Trees, 319*, inset on colour).

Kittens and pumpkins ■ The kitten here is already known to us. We have seen it in *Conversation (251)*; it reappears on a fan (W295) and makes a final reappearance in *Where Do We Come From?* Since *Conversation* was now in Paris, it seems most likely that this little figure was copied from a sketch now lost, which Gauguin carried about with him (see *251*, under 'Absence').
As to the vegetables in the background, they seem far too big to be the apples that have traditionally been seen. Are they perhaps pumpkins? We know that Gauguin painted pumpkins in late November. Van Gogh told Theo on 24-25 November 'Gauguin is in the middle of […] a big still life of orange pumpkins and apples and white cloth on yellow fore- and backgrounds[1]'. This work was being painted simultaneously with a variety of others (the washerwomen, the portrait of Van Gogh, and landscapes) as Van Gogh notes in a later letter, adding: 'Gauguin is working hard, I very much like a still life with yellow fore- and backgrounds[2]'.
Now this large still life, probably painted on the coarse jute characteristic of Gauguin's Arles campaign, seems to have left no trace. Has it disappeared? Was it ever finished? Did Gauguin simply assign it to the number of what Van Gogh called his 'dead-end enterprises[3]' and paint over it?
He might, of course, have cut it down; in which case, this *Little Cat* could be all that remains of it, Gauguin having disposed of the part comprising white linen and apples. This hypothesis would have the merit of explaining the more astonishing aspects of the present work: the intensely simplified composition, comprising these few large-scale elements; the way they are truncated; and the exceptional format of the painting. At all events, it seems plausible to place this experimental work around November, given its combination of 'older' components – damask, kitten, and naïve composition – with colouristic considerations not unrelated to those of *Blue Trees* or the lost still life.

[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 24-25 November 1888 (558a).
[2] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3-4 December 1888 (560).
[3] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3-4 December 1888 (560).

Documents and bibliography:
List of the Fayet collection drafted in 1910 at the château d'Igny (Cat and Gourds [valued FF] 800).
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 294 (repr.).
K. Pope: *Gauguin and Martinique* (doctoral thesis, University of Austin, Texas, 1981), microfilm edition, 1986, pp. 171-172.
R. Bacou: 'Paul Gauguin et Gustave Fayet', *Actes du colloque Gauguin […] 1989*, Paris, 1991, pp. 23 (photo of the Igny studio with this work hanging on the wall), 31.

Provenance:
Bought in 1906 by Gustave Fayet, Igny (Mme Bacou informs us that this work was one of the eighteen paintings still in Fayet's ownership at his death in 1925).
Mme d'Andoque de Sériège, Béziers.
Private collection.



Little cat, detail of *Conversation, Tropics (251)*. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

'The High Note of Yellow'

'Oh, yes! He loved yellow, that fine fellow Vincent, that painter from Holland; gleams of sunlight that warmed his soul; how he hated fog. He needed heat', Gauguin recalled some years later. And he remembered their complementarity: 'for my part, I loved red[1]'.
Van Gogh did indeed work on yellow with a passion, in a huge number of paintings, among which are the series of sunflowers and several landscapes with yellow skies (see *Blue Trees, 319*, entry and inset). Later he confessed how much the *Sunflowers* had cost him: 'working up the heat to melt those golds, […] the first-comer could never do it, it needs the energy and attention of the whole man'; 'I kept going mainly with coffee and alcohol. I admit all that, but the fact remains that to reach the high note of yellow I reached that summer, I really did have to have some artificial assistance[2]'.
In his *Self-portrait, 309*, Gauguin had introduced a yellow background that was for the most integrated into a system of contrasts, and when he arrived in Arles, he was profoundly struck by Van Gogh's combinations of yellow. Later, he asked Van Gogh to make him a gift of the notorious yellow-on-yellow-background *Sunflowers* that he so much admired (this was surely F454, reproduced at *319*, in the inset on colour)[3].
Thus the yellow sky of *Blue Trees (319)* and the lost still life of pumpkins with its yellow fore- and backgrounds (of which the present work is perhaps a remnant), both painted in November, must both have been inspired by Van Gogh.
During his Arles campaign, Gauguin frequently enhanced his yellows with juxtaposed red. Van Gogh, meanwhile, was continuing his research, frequently allying yellow with green, most notably in the successive portraits of Roulin that he painted during November-December.

[1] Paul Gauguin: 'Natures mortes', *Essais d'art libre*, January 1894, p. 273.
[2] Letters from Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 22-23 January (573) and 24 March 1889 (581).
[3] Vincent Van Gogh to Gauguin, 22 January 1889 (Cooper VG/PG).



322

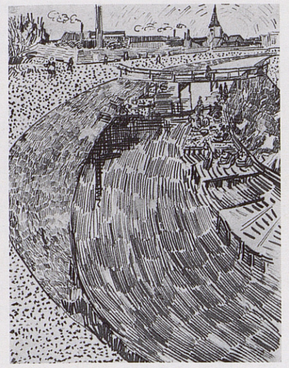
322
Washerwomen at the Canalside

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.92
Signed and dated lower left:
P. Gauguin 1888
W302

Painted on the coarse canvas characteristic of the Arles campaign (see *Les Alyscamps, 316*, inset), this work dates from late November 1888: a Van Gogh letter of 24-25 November states that 'Gauguin has a very beautiful picture of washerwomen on the go[1]'. Ten days later, he confirmed that Gauguin 'has a good picture of washerwomen, indeed very good in my opinion[2]'. The picture may have been finished by then since Van Gogh does not state that it was still in progress, which he does with the other works mentioned at the same time.
No second picture on this theme is cited, so *325* must have been started after the 3-4 December letter; it is clearly freer in its manner than the present work, and must be the later of the two.
The *lavoir* or washing-place was some 400 metres from the artists' house, and Van Gogh had painted it some time before; the wooden pontoons extending out into the canal de la Roubine, opposite the gasworks, are clearly visible in one of his spring drawings (F1473) and still more so in a June painting (F427) and the drawing F1444. But, where Van Gogh recorded a roughly east-west view of the canal, Gauguin chose the north bank, no doubt at the north end



The site in recent times.



V. Van Gogh: *Canal de la Roubine*, pen drawing (F1444). Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum Collection.

of the footbridge visible in Van Gogh's works, whence he turned to face south.
Van Gogh must therefore have led Gauguin to the canal, having already painted several scenes of clothes-washing in Arles (see, for example, F396, F397, F426 and F571). Gauguin had painted such a scene two years before in *Washerwomen at Simonou Mill (224)*; looking for motifs in unfamiliar territory, he quite naturally followed in Van Gogh's footsteps, taking up this convenient subject in which the models could not help but maintain their 'pose'.
An Arlésienne recorded in Gauguin's 1888-1890 sketchbook[3] is related to these washerwomen, though not identical to any of them. As to the head of the boy in the lower part of this painting (partly obscured by a profile), its origins sureli lie in a drawing;



Young Boy, drawing. Current whereabouts unknown. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

featuring a play of shadows that may derive from the little portrait *304*, this drawing must also be the source for a second – bust-length – version of the same young man in a zincograph (Guérin 5, 1889). There, however, as the medium dictates, he is facing another way.

Strange couple ■ The theme, then, is one shared with Van Gogh. But the surprising and utterly joyless introduction into this decorative scene of the outlined figures of the foreground marks a return to the iconoclastic spirit that Gauguin had developed while working alongside Bernard during the latter part of his Breton campaign. The left-hand figure is bizarrely placed right next to the frame as though running up against a wall. The heads of both these figures are distorted rather like those of the *Vision (308)*; there may also be a reminiscence of the faces of two women on the banks of the Seine in a Bernard painting now in the Musée de Brest (it is reproduced at *Still Life with Fan, 259*).
The presence of these strange figures remains unexplained. Should we think of this couple, like the one in *Blue Trees (319)*, as equivalent to the 'lovers' that Van Gogh liked to place in the corners of his paintings, where they are generally found on foot? Or is this the first appearance of what Dorra has dubbed 'Gauguin's unsympathetic observers[4]': slightly aloof individuals, frequently of rather alarming appearance, presiding over an otherwise innocent scene? We have no proof of this. In the zincograph, the boy is found with the central figure of



Human Misery, zincograph (Guérin 5). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Human Misery, on whom he directs a lecherous gaze; this is clearly a scene of temptation; but there is no sign of that in the present work.
The area in the left foreground could not, in any case, have remained empty, and rather than fill it with a bush, Gauguin perhaps found it more interesting to furnish it with figures facing the opposite way from the washerwomen in the centre; the resulting counterpoint divides the space in unprecedented fashion. It may therefore be unwise to seek too overt a symbolic meaning for this group, and allow that the painting was very largely governed by considerations of formal experiment.
On the other hand, we know that the Synthetists were, at this point, increasingly conscious of the fact that form is not neutral but expressive in and of itself (see *Fruit, 312*, inset). Here the positioning and treatment of the left-hand figures is a rather aggressive stylistic artifice of Bernardian kind, introducing an overtone of the bizarre in an otherwise perfectly banal scene.
Gauguin returned to this kind of experiment during his Arles campaign; for the multiplication of these alienating effects, see *Near Arles (323)*, inset.
Shortly afterwards, Gauguin copied one of the washerwomen figures into the background of a large unpublished charcoal study of a little girl skipping with her rope; the girl's minuscule figure was reused in *Near Arles (323)*. The drawing is perhaps an idea for a picture, in which case that probably unpainted work might, in the wake of the *Vision (308)* and the present work, have constituted an experiment with juxtaposed figures of different scales.
Gauguin also made two little paintings on silk after the two *Washerwomen* paintings; Rewald reproduces the one based on the present work[5].

[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 24-25 November 1888 (558a, D).
[2] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3-4 December 1888 (560, D).
[3] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 16 (D).
[4] H. Dorra: 'Gauguin's Unsympathetic Observers', *GBA*, December 1970, pp. 367-372.
[5] J. Rewald: *Gauguin Drawings*, New York and London, 1958, pl. 16.

Documents and bibliography:
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 24-25 November 1888 (558a) and 3-4 December 1888 (560), see above.
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 72: at the base of the page carrying a preparatory list of the works that Gauguin was planning to send to the exhibition of Les XX in February 1889, Gauguin lists the pictures that he has painted in Arles, among which are '2 [pictures of] laundrywomen'. Neither was eventually selected.
M. Denis: *Journal*, Paris, 1957, vol. II, p. 59, entries for 1907: Denis saw this work in the Von Mutzenbecher collection at Wiesbaden in early 1907.
Y. Thirion: 'L'influence de l'estampe japonaise dans l'œuvre de Gauguin', *GBA*, special Gauguin number, January-April 1956 (published 1958), p. 107.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 302 (repr.).
R. Pickvance: *Van Gogh in Arles*, New York, 1984, pp. 15 (on the location), 63, 104, 136 (its representation by Van Gogh), 220-221 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
(?) Weimar, Grossherzogliches Museum für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe, July-September 1905 (in P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven…*, Sigmaringen, 1997, pp. 24-27), no. 16: *Washerwomen at Arles*, but this might equally be *325*.
Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago, and New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1959, no. 15.
Van Gogh in Arles, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1984, no. 130.

Provenance:
The existence of a Druet-Vizzavona photo of this work indicates its presence in France during the early twentieth century.
Baron Curt von Mutzenbecher (1866-1938), Wiesbaden, c. early 1907 (see Denis' *Journal*, D above). Chamberlain and Manager of the royal performances of Prussia and of the Wiesbaden theatre, Von Mutzenbecher was one of the first German admirers of Gauguin and in 1904 owned at least three paintings – none of which match the present work – and a monotype. Some of these works had been acquired from Vollard. In March 1906, his friend Von Bodenhausen bought a few more works from him in Paris, among which were one or more paintings by Gauguin (Kropmanns, 1997, p. 63). But in a letter to Kessler of 7 April 1907, Mutzenbecher said that he owned only two works by Gauguin (p. 63). The date of his acquisition of this *Washerwomen* is unknown.
Henckel, Berlin.
William S. Paley, New York, 1953.
New York, The William S. Paley Collection at the Museum of Modern Art – SPC 15.90.



323

323
Near Arles

Canvas. 0.72 × 0.92
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W309

Painted on the coarse canvas that Gauguin bought a few days after his arrival in Arles (see *Les Alyscamps*, *316*, inset), this picture may one of the many works that Gauguin was working on simultaneously in very early December, when Van Gogh announced that, at the same as a still life, his own portrait and 'washerwomen', Gauguin was 'currently doing landscapes[1]'.



Little Girl Skipping, sketch. Gauguin's sketchbook, p. 14, detail. Jerusalem, Israel Museum.



Dog, sketch. Gauguin's sketchbook, p. 18, detail. Jerusalem, Israel Museum.

A list of certain Arles works made by Gauguin in his 1888-1890 sketchbook[2] mentions '2 [paintings of] *Mas*' (**D**). The motif of *324* might make it one of these paintings of *Mas*; but is the second of these in that case *Haystack (315)* – which is painted on fine canvas, and may date from early in Gauguin's stay – or this view of a road,



Face of a Little Girl, sketch. Gauguin's sketchbook, p. 15, detail. Jerusalem, Israel Museum.

which is closer to *315* in both format and atmosphere? The earliest known title for this work is *Autumn Landscape at Arles*, which it bore in the 1893 exhibition. Both 1889 exhibitions, that of Les Vingt in February and the Volpini exhibition in the summer, the list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, and the 1891 Gauguin sale included *Mas*, and some of these also included 'landscapes' from Arles. Their identification is an inextricable problem with many ramifications, and the solutions that we propose are hypothetical and given in very abbreviated form.
We see the Alpilles deep in the background of this landscape. The 1888-1890 sketchbook carries a drawing of a dog faithfully reused in this picture, along with a sketch of the little girl skipping with a rope at the apex of the bend in the road[3]. We should note in passing that this child seems to have formed part of a projected painting since Gauguin made a large drawing of her (cited in *Washerwomen, 322*), along with a study of her face in his sketchbook[4].

A shadow ■ Strangely enough, the blue patch barring the road beside the dog seems almost to be the 'standing' shadow of a recumbent dog. Or does it evoke the enigmatic master of the dog? At all events, it is strongly reminiscent of a theory set out in a slightly earlier letter to Bernard, of which this shadow might be the application: 'You've been talking with Laval about shadows and ask me if I care a fig about them. […] as far as possible I should keep aloof from whatever gives the illusion of something and since shadow is the *trompe-l'oeil* for the sun, I'm inclined to eliminate it. If the shadow comes into your composition as a necessary form, that's quite another matter. Thus, instead of a figure, you put just the shadow of a figure, this is an original starting point whose strangeness you have calculated in advance[5]'.
The sentence that follows – 'Like the raven on the head of Pallas who is there rather than a parrot because of the artist's choice, a calculated choice' – refers to Edgar Allan Poe's essay *The Philosophy of Composition*, in which Poe sets out a carefully designed method of composition and effect. We know that Gauguin had been very struck by this essay (see *Fruit, 312*); the fact that the letter associates it with such an enigmatic shadow-effect confirms that certain of Gauguin's experiments at this period – and notably in this painting – were very cerebral in kind.
Moreover, it is just possible that this artificial shadow also registers a memory of certain of Manet's illustrations for the 1875 Lesclide edition of *Le Corbeau*; for example, *The Chair*[6], with its fantastical shadow of the bird perched on the bust of Pallas, and, behind the unoccupied chair, the shadow apparently cast by its invisible occupant. Gauguin knew this edition, since he used Manet's profile drawing of the raven in the background of his own 1891 portrait of Mallarmé, and it is quite possible that he had seen this edition by 1888 (see *Fruit, 312*).



É. Manet: *Chair*, autholithograph with wash, 1875 (Guérin-Manet 86d). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

We can at least be sure that Gauguin's interest in Poe, which was already of long-standing, was connected with the increasing numbers of bizarre effects of every kind that we meet in Gauguin's works of this period (see inset).

The Strange

Gauguin was a great admirer of Poe, not only of his fiction, which he had long known (at least since rue Carcel, see *Gauguin Family, 70*), but also of his thoughts on art, as Merlhès has shown[1]. Among Poe's non-fictional works, Gauguin particularly liked a few lines from *Marginalia*, which he often copied out. We find them in both *Cahier pour Aline* and *Diverses choses*[2]: 'There is no exquisite beauty without some strangeness in the proportions. Remove this strange, unexpected, new and original element and all the ideal charm of beauty disappears with it. We lose the unknown, the vague, and the uncomprehended, and we feel its loss[3]'. Gauguin may have known this passage by 1888, since, as Merlhès has pointed out[4], it could have been copied from an 1882 French edition of *Tales of the Grotesque* that included a 'Life of Edgar Poe', and we know from the letter of 22 December 1888 cited below that Gauguin was familiar with the story of Poe's life.
It is, at all events, certain that Gauguin and Bernard's interest in Poe's thought had already been awakened by 1888, since they must have discussed *The Philosophy of Composition* as early as that summer (see *Fruit, 312*).
The passage encourages the creator to invest at least as much strangeness in the treatment as in the subject-matter of a work, and it can only have encouraged the new ideas being developed in Pont-Aven over that summer: ideas that justified stylisation, distortion, the transformation of nature, and the liberty to express inner phenomena rather than everyday reality (see the *Vision, 308*, inset on Synthetism). Modern literature had made repeated excursions into the fantastical, notably in the work of Poe, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and Maupassant (see *Fruit, 312*, 'Poe'); Gauguin appreciated the genre, and the domain of the fantastical may have seemed particularly favourable for this type of stylistic exploration since it allowed the borders of the subjective to be still further expanded.
At all events, it is noticeable that after a few 'normal' works at the beginning of his Arles campaign, from mid-November strange touches infiltrate certain pictures, with the 'blood-steeped' hand of *Woman with Pigs (320)* perhaps foreshadowing this tendency. It originates in a conscious and deliberate quest for effect, and Gauguin did not shy away from the arbitrary: examples include the rather schizophrenic introduction of figures in *Washerwomen (322)*, redolent of Bernard's iconoclastic stylisation, and the appearance of the enigmatic shadow on the road in the present work, the result of a 'calculated choice' suggested or sanctioned by the ideas in Poe's essay (see opposite).
Over the course of his stay, however, these rather cerebral effects give way to more 'suggestive' ones, perhaps because a sort of osmosis was occurring between the two men, and thus take on a new life: as the distortions of *Washerwomen (325)*, with its curious but very inspired atmosphere; and as the anguished and irrational plant metamorphoses in the portrait of Van Gogh or *Public Garden (329)*. It is as if the mental suffering and disquiet of Van Gogh were somehow communicating themselves to Gauguin, reminding him again of Poe. On the eve of the crisis, Gauguin wrote to Schuffenecker, explaining Van Gogh's deeply disturbed mental state with a comparison: 'Remember the life of Edgar Poe, who, from suffering and the state of his nerves, became an alcoholic[5]'.

[1] Gauguin's *Cahier pour Aline*, presented by V. Merlhès, 1989, and V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, pp. 44-48.
[2] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, pp. 214-215.
[3] This re-translation of the notably concise French translation of Poe's *dictum* copied out by Gauguin seems truer to Gauguin's views. The original is more extensive: '"But," says Lord Bacon, (how justly!), "there is no exquisite beauty without some *strangeness* in the proportions." Take away the element of strangeness – of unexpectedness – of novelty – of originality – call it what we will – and all that is *ethereal* in loveliness is lost at once. We lose – we miss the *unknown* – the vague – the uncomprehended…' (*Marginalia*, X). Poe is discussing rhythm. His quotation from Bacon is slightly inaccurate. It comes from Bacon's Essay XLIII: 'Of Beauty': 'There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion' [Translator's note].
[4] *Cahier pour Aline*, note 1.
[5] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 December 1888 (Merlhès 193).

A dog lying in a similar position reappears in *Kelp Gatherers* (W349) of 1889.

[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3-4 December 1888 (560).
[2] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), pp. 72-73 (**D**).
[3] Huyghe, 1952, pp. 18 and 14 (**D**).
[4] Huyghe, 1952, p. 15 (**D**).
[5] Gauguin to Émile Bernard, late October-early November 1888 (Merlhès 176).
[6] M. Guérin: *L'Œuvre gravé de Manet*, no. 86d.

Documents and bibliography:
(?) Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 72: list of Arles works as annex to the preparatory list of the works for the exhibition of Les XX in 1889, '2 [pictures of] *Mas*' (see above); and p. 73, definitive list for the exhibition of Les XX: '[no.] 11 *Mas* [FF] 500'.
(?) List sent to O. Maus in late 1888, giving the latest prices asked for the works to be exhibited at les XX (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): Gauguin wanted FF 500 for no. 11.
(?) Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, spring 1889 (Malingue LXXVII): among the pictures that Gauguin asks Schuffenecker to put into the Volpini exhibitions, he cites '8° The Arles *Mas* at Van Gogh's [Boussod et Valadon]'.
(?) Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): among the no. 30 canvases, 'Arles landscape. *Mas* [valued FF] 400', also an 'Arles landscape with two dogs [FF] 400'.
(?) J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and […] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 309 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
(?) *6e exposition des XX*, Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, February 1889, no. 11 (*Mas*).
(?) *Peintures du groupe impressionniste et synthétiste*, Paris, Exposition universelle, Volpini premises on the Champ-de-Mars, summer 1889, no. 38: *Mas, Arles* (but this might equally refer to *324*, cited in the letter to Schuffenecker in which instructions for this exhibition are given), or possibly no. 37: *Landscape, Arles*.
(?) Shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.
Den Frie Udstilling, Copenhagen, Free Exhibitions Building, 1893, no. 156 (*Autumn Landscape at Arles*). Despite the inversion of the dimensions in the catalogue, the identification is proven by the purchase of Vult von Steyern.
Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen, 1926, no. 55.
Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, 1970, no. 9.
Gauguin og Van Gogh i København i 1893, Charlottenlund, Ordrupgaard, 1984, no. 28.

Provenance:
(?) On deposit at Boussod et Valadon, c. 1889 (see Gauguin's letter, **D** above), or c. 1890 (see Boussod et Valadon list, **D** above).
(?) Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 13 of the sale and 14 of the auctioneer's book, *Mas*, 245 F to Daniel [de Monfreid], 55 rue du Château (Paris) – or: no. 26, *Arles Landscape*, 350 F to Monsieur Michau, 9 faubourg Poissonnière (Paris).
Sent to Mette Gauguin, Copenhagen, for the exhibition of 1893.
Bought on that occasion by the Swedish publicist Frederik Vult von Steyern in 1893.
Bought from Vult von Steyern in 1911 by:
Stockholm, Nationalmuseum – 1735.

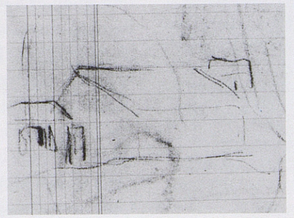


324

324
Mas, near Arles

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.92
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W310

We have adopted the title (*Les Mas, environs d'Arles*) borne by this work at the 1935 sale. It fits the subject perfectly, and this picture is surely one of the '2 [pictures of] *Mas*' listed in Gauguin's 1888-1890 sketchbook[1]. But since there is no proof that it was always so titled, some doubt remains as to the subject of the *Mas* that appeared in the 1889 exhibitions and even in the 1891 sale, since there are three candidates: this painting, *Haystack (315)* and the road (*323*).
Some days after his arrival in Arles, Gauguin declared 'I shall need time to take in the character of the place, and I don't expect to do any serious work within a month[2]'; if he was not mistaken, this painting and the road *323*, which are very accurate reflections of the 'character of the place', must have been finished in late November or in December. They are presumably the 'landscapes' on

Coiffe and *Farmhouse*, sketches. Gauguin's sketchbook, pp. 21 and 20, detail. Jerusalem, Israel Museum.

which Gauguin was working in early December (see *323*).
Gauguin's 1888-1890 sketchbook contains a sketch of the houses, along with one of *coiffes* similar to those worn by the little figures here[3].

[1] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952, **D**).
[2] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 27 October 1888 (Merlhès 175).
[3] Huyghe, 1952, pp. 20 and 21 (**D**).

Documents and bibliography:
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 72: list of Arles works as annex to the preparatory list of the works for the exhibition of Les XX in 1889, '2 [pictures of] *Mas*' (see above); and (?) p. 73, definitive list for the exhibition of Les XX: '[no.] 11 *Mas* [FF] 500'.
(?) List sent to O. Maus in late 1888, giving the latest prices asked for the works to be exhibited at les XX (archives de l'Art contemporain, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels): Gauguin wanted FF 500 for no. 11.
Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, spring 1889 (Malingue LXXVII): among the pictures that Gauguin asks Schuffenecker to put into the Volpini exhibition, he cites '7° The Arles landscape you have with bushes'.
Handwritten list of works on deposit with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890, probably drafted in October for Joyant when he took over the business abandoned by Theo Van Gogh (J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, p. 49): among the no. 30 canvases, 'Landscape with tufts of vegetation and little figures in a bush [valued FF] 400'.
Probably: J. Huret: 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Écho de Paris*, 23 February 1891, p. 2: 'The Paul Gauguin Exhibition takes place today, Sunday, at the Hôtel Drouot and [...] the sale is for tomorrow'. After giving a list of the works for sale, Huret goes on to speak of the 'Goupil gallery, where, in the afternoon of the day before yesterday, crowds formed around these thirty paintings'.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 310 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
(?) *6e exposition des XX*, Brussels, Musée royal de Peinture, February 1889, no. 11, (*Mas*).
(?) *Peintures du groupe impressionniste et synthétiste*, Paris, Exposition universelle, Volpini premises on the Champ-de-Mars, summer 1889, no. 38: *Mas, Arles* (but see also *323*, which may also have been cited in Gauguin's letter to Schuffenecker in which instructions for this exhibition are given), or perhaps no. 37: *Landscape, Arles.*
Probably: shown at Boussod et Valadon until 21 February 1891, then at the hôtel Drouot on Sunday 22, before the Gauguin sale of 23 February. Huret's article (**D** above) shows that, to the informed public, these events had the status of exhibitions.

Provenance:
Was in Schuffenecker's hands in spring, 1889: see Gauguin's letter, **D** above.
Deposited for sale with Boussod et Valadon, c. 1890: see list, **D** above.
Probably: Gauguin sale, Paris, Drouot, 23 February 1891, no. 13 of the sale and 14 of the auctioneer's book, *Mas*, 245 F to Daniel [de Monfreid], 55 rue du Château (Paris) – or: no. 26, *Arles Landscape*, 350 F to Monsieur Michau, 9 faubourg Poissonnière (Paris). It is likely that this work, whose presence at Boussod et Valadon seems relatively certain, was included in the Gauguin sale, as were a number of other 'unsold' paintings on deposit at the gallery.
Sale M.W. [L. Walery], Paris, Drouot, 12 April 1935, no. 78 (*Mas, near Arles*).
J.J. Puritz, New York.
Sale, New York, Parke-Bernet, 17-18 January 1945, no. 164 (to J. Chambrun).
A.J. Cronin, Vevey (Switzerland).
Private collection.
Sale, London, Christie's, 6 February 2001, no. 7.

325
Washerwomen

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.92
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W303

Painted on the coarse canvas that Gauguin bought on his arrival in Arles (see *Les Alyscamps, 316*, inset), this painting is one of the two Arles 'Laundrywomen' mentioned in Gauguin's sketchbook; given its very free manner, it is surely the later of the two. It was no doubt painted in December, since a Van Gogh letter of 3 or 4 December 1888 mentions only one completed *Washerwomen*[1].
Certain aspects of the first *Washerwomen* are immediately evocative of Bernard, and a comparison with Bernard arises in relation to the present work too, in this case with a tiny study of a washerwoman, Luthi 119. Bernard dated it to 1888, and may have painted it in Brittany, in which case Gauguin could have seen it; it is remarkable both for the abstraction of its background and the impression of movement given by the figure of the washerwoman. But it is the spirit of Van Gogh that most clearly transpires in this second *Washerwomen*. The lyri-



É. Bernard: *Washerwoman* (Luthi 119).
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

cism and vitality of movement and colour here speak eloquently of the symbiosis that gradually established itself – at certain levels – between the two artists.
The effects here are ones that we have already met, but they are taken to unprecedented extremes. The arrangement of the figures on a swirling coloured background exaggerates and stylises that of *Woman with Pigs (320)*; the overhead perspective, with its exclusion of horizon and waters reaching up to the frame, is one that Gauguin had long used – for example in *Bathing Place (223)* – but here it has the effect of reversing space, while the distortion of form detected in the view of *Pont-Aven* (*313*) now amounts to something like a shredding of form.
This excessive stylisation is, of course, conducted in the name of 'suggestive abstraction', in conformity with the principles of the new figuration (see the *Vision*, *308*, inset on Synthetism). But the original scene is here invested with a powerful sense of the irrational by Gauguin's 'subjective' gaze, which confers on it a semblance of occult ceremony.
What, for example, is the apparently flaming surface by which the old woman on the right is silhouetted: is it a reflection in the water of the setting sun, or a 'burning bush' of autumn colours? In either case, it contrives a surprising juxtaposition of the elements fire and water. What is the shape, mid-right, which somewhat resembles the head of a large cat but which should logically pertain to the plant world? Emerging above the goat and a plant arabesque, it seems to form a link between the animal and



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vegetable kingdoms and a higher world of flames and smoke. And finally, who is this old woman with her dark profile and hieratic pose? Is she some guardian of fire, or a sorceress attuned to elements and animal world alike?
We have nothing but the painting to guide us in answering these questions. Certainly, if there is any symbolism in this painting, it seems to take the form of the spontaneous and intuitive inscription of primitive phenomena (fire, water, animality) rather than the expression of long-meditated considerations such as those that inhere in *Human Misery (317)*. But it seems still more probable that, just as he did in the other *Washerwomen (322)*, Gauguin was conducting an experiment in the manipulation of form, and viewed these forms as expressive in and of themselves (on this notion, see *Fruit*, *312*, inset), almost independently of the subject of the work, which tends to become a mere pretext.
Thus, though the irrational and emotional twist that Gauguin here gives to Bernardian distortion is clearly inspired by Van Gogh, this painting does not have the sense of reality customary in the work of the latter. It is nonetheless a work of striking originality and success, and undoubtedly marked by the strangeness that Gauguin's Arles works frequently harbour, registering as they do the influence of the fantastical, and Poe in particular (see *Near Arles*, *323*, inset).
We know of no sketches for this scene, which was probably painted very largely in the studio. Is there any connection between the goat here and an unpublished sketch



Martinican Scene, detail of a zincograph (Guérin 9). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

(dating perhaps from around 1887-1889) of the head and breast of a somewhat similar (grazing) animal in left profile? Or was there perhaps a drawing now unknown of this animal? The goat in a zincograph made in early 1889 (Guérin 9) seems to have the same original as the one in the present work. Gauguin made a little painting on silk of this picture[2], matching the one he had made of *322*. And the zincograph (Guérin 6) of early 1889, though it belongs to a series in which many of the prints comprise elements deriving from a variety of contexts, paradoxically offers an astonishingly faithful version of this painting. The most significant variation is found in the waters of the river, where the blazing colours of the painting have been



Washerwomen, zincograph, early 1889 (Guérin 6). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

replaced by imaginary whirlpools, thus retaining the 'suggestive' qualities of the background.
The picture can clearly be seen behind Gauguin in a contemporary photograph.



Gauguin in front of *Washerwomen*.
Photo: Boutet de Monvel. Private collection.

[1] Letter from Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3-4 December 1888 (560), quoted at *322*.
[2] J. Rewald: *Gauguin Drawings*, New York and London, 1958, pl. 17.

Documents and bibliography:
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 72: list of Arles works as annex to the preparatory list for the exhibition of les XX in February 1889, '2 [pictures of] Laundrywomen' (neither was finally exhibited).
G.-D. de Monfreid, manuscript version of his article in *La Revue provinciale* (see below, 1903): Joly-Segalen sale, Paris, Drouot, 12 June 1992, no. 85.
G.-D. de Monfreid: 'Paul Gauguin', *La Revue provinciale*, November 1903, p. 386: 'There is no subject in this canvas; but the colours sound a powerful fanfare, and the figures in their simplified draughtsmanship have so little of the human remaining to them that they seem to come from a world of mystery and terror'.
G.-D. de Monfreid: 'Sur Paul Gauguin', *L'Ermitage*, December 1903, p. 270.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 303 (repr.).
R. Bacou: 'Paul Gauguin et Gustave Fayet', *Actes du colloque Gauguin* [...] *1989*, Paris, 1991, p. 25.

Exhibitions:
(?) Weimar, Grossherzogliches Museum für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe, July-September 1905 (in P. Kropmanns: *Gauguin und die Schule von Pont-Aven...*, Sigmaringen, 1997, p. 24-27), no. 16: *Washerwomen in Arles*. According to Kropmanns, many of the works were lent by Fayet: but this title could equally refer to *322*.
Salon d'automne, Paris, Grand Palais, 1906, no. 10.
Bilbao, Museo de Bellas Artes, 1910, no. 3.
Van Gogh in Arles, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1984, no. 131.
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental du Prieuré, 1985, no. 98.
Van Gogh et Arles, Arles, former hôpital Van Gogh, 1989, no. 36.
Gauguin, les XX et La Libre Esthétique, Liège, Salle Saint-Georges, 1994-1995, no. 17.

Provenance:
J.-L. Brouillon (pseudonym of Jean de Rotonchamp, later biographer of Gauguin), Paris.
Bought from Rotonchamp by Gustave Fayet, Béziers, in 1903.
Sale [G. Fayet], Paris, Drouot, 16 May 1908, no. 22.
Probably Etchevarrieta.
Bought with funds from the Diputación Foral de Vizcaya in 1919; in 1920 entered:
Bilbao (Spain), Museo de Bellas Artes – 82.18.

326
Van Gogh Painting Sunflowers

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.92.
Signed and dated lower right:
P. Gauguin 88
W296

'Gauguin's working hard [...] he has a portrait of me on the go that I don't reckon one of his dead-end enterprises', wrote Van Gogh on 3 or 4 December 1888[1]. We do not know whether this portrait, on which Gauguin was working simultaneously with a number of other works (a still life and more than one landscape), was finished in short order; we do know that, a fortnight later, it was completed. Gauguin wrote to Theo to announce the fact: 'I've recently



Sketch for the portrait. Gauguin's sketchbook, p. 70. Jerusalem, Israel Museum.



Face and thumb of Van Gogh, sketch. Gauguin's sketchbook, p. 41. Jerusalem, Israel Museum.

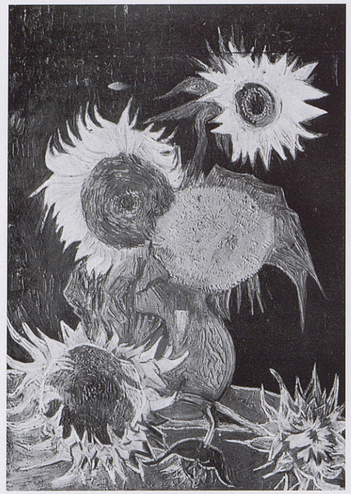
done a portrait of your brother as motif of a picture "the painter of sunflowers" no. 30 canvas. From a geographical point of view it's maybe not a good resemblance but it does, I think, have something intimate



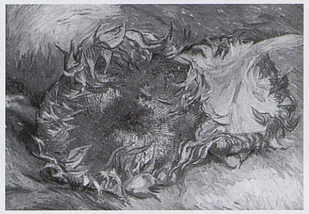
326

about him and if you've no objection keep it unless you don't like it[2]".
The work is painted on the coarse canvas that Gauguin bought shortly after he arrived in Arles, and which he himself primed (see *Les Alyscamps*, *316*, inset). Jirat-Wasiutynski and Newton have studied the very thin and absorbent layer of priming, which produced the rugged matt effect sought at the time, but which also caused the convexity and fragility from which the work suffers[3].
It is clear from X-ray examination (the same authors tell us) that the figure was drawn rapidly and practically without revision. A roughed-out plan of the work as whole in Gauguin's sketchbook of 1888-1890 shows that Gauguin had, from the start, intended the curious background horizontals that connect the face of Van Gogh with his easel. Another page shows sketches surely taken from life of Van Gogh's face and his thumb in the thumb-hole of his palette[4].
The jacket worn over a very high double-breasted waistcoat is faithfully reproduced; Van Gogh wears both items in his self-portrait as Buddhist monk (F476), and we learn from one of his letters that the jacket was brown and trimmed with blue[5]. The straw-bottomed chair on which the bouquet stands is of kind well-known from Van Gogh's works, for example his views of his bedroom or *Chair* (F498). The painting hanging on the studio wall, on the other hand, seems to resemble no known work by either Gauguin, Van Gogh or Bernard, and remains a mystery.

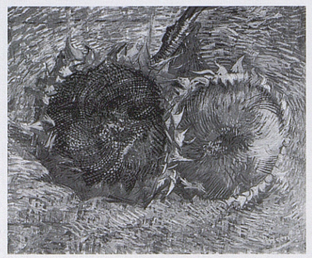
Suns ■ As to the sunflowers, they could not, of course have been painted from nature in the middle of the autumn. Van Gogh had been unable to continue the series that he had begun in August because the flowers were 'finished' by the last days of September[6]. The ones in this painting therefore derive from Van Gogh's own pictures, in particular from the jagged forms of F459 (alas, destroyed during the Second World



V. Van Gogh: *Five Sunflowers*, August 1888 (F459, destroyed during the Second World War). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



V. Van Gogh: *Two Sunflowers*, 1887 (F375, former Gauguin collection). New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



V. Van Gogh: *Two Sunflowers Head-On*, 1887 (F376, former Gauguin collection). Bern, Kunstmuseum Bern.

War) or from the petal-less heads of F454 (reproduced at *319*, in the inset on colour). These flowers, with their connotations of life and light, were, for Gauguin, emblematic of his colleague. He already owned 'two sunflower pictures […] picked up [from Boussod et Valadon] in Paris', as Van Gogh told Theo in January 1889[7]: these must be F375 and/or F376, which were exchanged for Gauguin's Martinican painting *Riverside (252)* in late 1887. And he had been profoundly struck by the August series, which he 'really liked' as soon as he saw them, to Van Gogh's great pride[8]; indeed, he preferred them to a Monet of the same motif[9] (this was *Suns* – D. Wildenstein, 628 – of 1880 that Gauguin could have seen exhibited in 1882 and 1883, or in the Durand-Ruel gallery before the painting was exported to the United States in 1886). Later, when he recalled the time he had passed at Van Gogh's side, the first thing he sought to evoke was Vincent's 'flowers of the sun, with their purple eyes, standing out against a yellow background[10]'.

In January 1889, Van Gogh wrote 'working up the heat to melt those golds, […] the first-comer could never do it / […]. The look of these paintings is a bit changeable, they grow richer the longer you look. / You know Gauguin absolutely loves them, what's more. Among other things, he said: "That… that's… the flower." / You know Jeannin has the peony, and Quost has the hollyhock, well, the sunflower's more or less mine[11]'.

Finally, in one of his first letters after the crisis in their relationship, Gauguin asked Van Gogh to give him one of the 'sunflowers on a yellow background which I consider a perfect example of the essential Vincent style[12]'. These 'sunflowers on a yellow background' are in all probability the painting F454 (reproduced in *Blue Trees, 319*), and Van Gogh's own copy of it, F458, made for Gauguin after he had asked for the original. (The authenticity of a third work of this kind, F457, has recently been questioned).

There is nothing gratuitous about Gauguin's remark that this work has as its motif 'the painter of sunflowers[13]': the composition has



C. Monet: *Suns* (D. Wildenstein 628). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

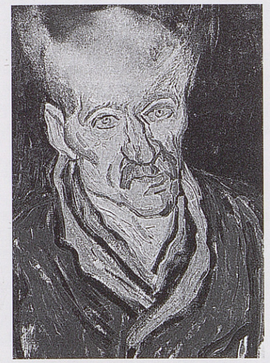
two poles, the painter, and his motif, the object of his work. The two are connected by a series of busy lines, and the second is by no means the lesser of the two; indeed, the one is unthinkable without the other.

An intimate portrait ■ The portrait was not, in Gauguin's words 'a very good resemblance', but was intended to reveal 'something intimate about [Van Gogh][14]'. This 'something' was no doubt the almost painful passion that went into Van Gogh's work; above the sensitive and rather likeable mouth, his eyes are entirely focused on

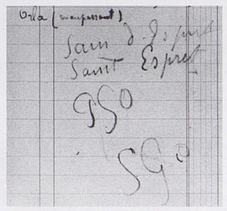


V. Van Gogh: *Sunflowers*, 1889 (F458). Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).

his own internal drama. No doubt there is also, over and beyond the passion, something morbid; the expression perhaps conveys the exhaustion of relentless struggle, and certainly there is the gloom of isolation. It is a sense of constraint and discomfort that emanates from Van Gogh here, a sense of psychic balance uneasily maintained; a



V. Van Gogh: *Portrait of a Patient in the Saint-Paul Hospice*, 1889 (F703). Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).



Page 220 of Gauguin's sketchbook, detail. Jerusalem, Israel Museum.

malaise of almost contagious kind, communicated by the subtle distortions of the face, whose features (in direct line of descent from certain 'synthetic' Breton women in the *Vision, 308*, or the 'mask' of the creature in *Fruit, 312*, q.v.: 'Temptation') are in places barely sketched in. The effect distantly foreshadows the astonishing mutations Van Gogh imparted to the skull of a madman in the Saint-Rémy asylum (F703). 'It's me all right, but me gone mad', Van Gogh apparently said[15], when he saw his portrait, and it is quite possible that, by December, Gauguin had already perceived the possibility of Van Gogh's madness. In that month, he copied into his sketchbook the famous pun 'Sain d'esprit/Saint Esprit', that Van Gogh had inscribed on the wall[16]. At all events, among the Arles works marked by strange effects (see *Near Arles, 323*, inset), this portrait seems to constitute one of the most complete attempts to exorcise the disquiet and tension that were invading the little yellow house (see inset, 'The Crisis').

Concealed ■ Suffering and irrationality are no less evident in the bouquet, the other pole of the composition, with its highly expressive distorted flowers. The painter looks down, but two beings secreted in the flowers gaze directly out at the spectator: from the upper sunflower, whose petals are like a swathe of blond hair, an eye surmounted by a perfectly human eyebrow looks out, while just below it, in the left-hand roundel, an imploring, naïve little face seems to evoke Van Gogh's lacerated soul, aspiring to escape the confinement overtly inscribed in his features. Gauguin was soon to give this little 'soul' a larger sister in *Public Garden (329)*.



O. Redon: *Marsh Flower, Sad Human Head*, lithograph (*Homage to Goya*, 1885). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Despite their resemblance to certain sunflowers painted by Van Gogh, these animated plants are much more akin to some of Redon's overtly Symbolist creations, such as the fantastical half-plants of his *Origins* (1883) or *Homage to Goya* (1885), albums that Gauguin must have known. Open eyes, it should be noted, reappear in the bouquets W603 and W606 from late in Gauguin's life.

Jesus ■ But the presence of these strange beings might also warrant our detecting in this portrait something more than an evocation of morbidity and latent madness. We might see in it a proud allusion to the creativity of the artist's struggle: a depiction of Van Gogh bestowing life on the objects of his art at the cost of his own happiness and stability.

We should remember that ideas about Symbolist portraiture were taking form at this stage: a portraiture that would neglect 'geographical' resemblance and 'aggrandize' the personality of the model, imparting a quality of the absolute (see self-portrait *Les Misérables, 309*, inset). Now it is certain that the terms in which Gauguin chose to speak of this work refer to the 'greatest' of models. Speaking of a shared moment of work and conversation, in which Van Gogh had recounted an episode of almost mystical devotion, Gauguin concludes: 'I began his portrait. I also had the vision of a Jesus preaching goodness and humility[17]'.

Certainly, this portrait, coming in the wake of the self-portrait *Les Misérables (309)*, marks a stage in the chain of thought by which he came to identify the artist with Christ; both, he felt, accepted the sacrifice of their own lives in order to give life to their works. Van Gogh himself had paved the way for this reflection, calling Christ 'a greater artist than any[18]', and Gauguin had willingly taken up the thought in his 'What an artist was this Jesus[19]' (see *Vision, 308*, 'Van Gogh and the artist-Christ', and inset on 'The Religious Function of the Artist').

In 1894, Gauguin was approached to draft a written portrait of his friend, in a planned second volume of articles on significant contemporary figures to be published in *Essais d'art libre*[20]; the project came to nothing and the second volume never appeared.

Van Gogh, in turn, longed to paint a portrait of Gauguin[21]. It is possible that a little study of a man with an aquiline nose, wearing a beret, which some now attribute to Van Gogh, is a fleeting attempt by Van Gogh to capture the memory of his friend[22]. At all events, Van Gogh never realised his

dream of a large-scale portrait since in September 1899 he wrote, 'I still hope to paint his portrait[23]'.
Alas, he was denied the opportunity to exercise his wonderful gift for portraiture on Gauguin and so complete the 'gallery' of portraits that he had requested in 1888 (see self-portrait *309*, 'Fraternal exchanges'); at this stage, it comprised a number of self-portraits, but the present work was perhaps the first to depict a colleague.

The Crisis

Van Gogh later said about this portrait 'it was really me, terribly tired and charged up as I then was'[1].
Van Gogh's mental state was fragile: Pickvance believes that Van Gogh was on the brink of depression even before Gauguin's arrival[2], and Merlhès adduces a rich variety of witnesses to Van Gogh's extreme moodiness of the time[3]. Moreover, he had invested huge hopes in Gauguin's arrival, since he was expecting the creation of a communal studio in the south to rescue him from his painful solitude. These hopes and that fragility, combined with exhaustion born of overwork and an unhealthy lifestyle[4], exacerbated the tensions that quickly arose between the two men. Despite their reciprocal esteem and openness, they did not find living in the same house easy, as Gauguin afterwards recorded in *Avant et après*[5].
It is proverbial wisdom not to require two lions to share a cage. The role of leader had spontaneously fallen to Gauguin, and neither disputed this, but it was only to be expected that the divergences of these two strong characters would come to the fore. A month after his arrival, Gauguin was complaining: 'I'm like a fish out of water in Arles, I find everything so small and mean, landscape and people alike. Van Gogh and I have little in common in general, especially in painting […] I just say *Yes, sir, very good, sir!* to keep him out of my hair. He likes my paintings a great deal but when I do them he always says I'm wrong to do this, I'm wrong to do that[6]'.
In fact their divergent artistic tastes, to which Gauguin several times refers – he liked Ingres, Raphael, Degas, Puvis de Chavannes, Cézanne and the primitives, while Van Gogh preferred Daubigny, Ziem, Rousseau, Daumier, Monticelli, and Romanticism – do little to explain their disagreements, since they had so much in common in other respects: their shared views on Japanese art, Delacroix, colour and Bernard's formal simplifications. But there can be no doubt that Van Gogh was deeply hurt when he realised, as he soon did, that Gauguin would not commit himself to the plan for a studio in the south of France. Gauguin was still dreaming of the tropics, and the more detached he became, the more desperately Van Gogh sought to retain him. As he later confessed, 'during the last few days there was only one thing on my mind: when he was working he was torn between life in Arles and his desire to go to Paris to further his plans[7]'. For his part, Gauguin was thinking of leaving but trying not to: 'I'm in a horrible fix here', he told Schuffenecker on 22 December, 'I owe [Theo] Van Gogh and Vincent a great deal and despite some disagreements I don't have it in me to resent this good-hearted man who is ill, who is suffering and asking me to stay. Remember the life of Edgar Poe, who, from suffering and the state of his nerves, became an alcoholic […] I'm staying here, but departure will always be latent[8]'.
The upshot is well-known: the increasing tension between them got the better of Van Gogh's nerves, and a crisis erupted – during which Van Gogh cut off a part of his own ear – putting an end to their joint enterprise. Knowing that his presence would exasperate Van Gogh, Gauguin avoided seeing him again before leaving Arles, and though they continued to correspond, they never met again. It was some time before Van Gogh's hostility toward Gauguin faded. He finally wrote to him on 22 January 1889: 'by now I feel remorse at having so insisted that you stay […] so that perhaps my insistence decided you to leave – unless perhaps your departure was premeditated in any case?[9]' But as early as 19 January he was telling Theo: 'One thing, thank goodness, is certain: I dare say that when it comes down to it Gauguin and I by nature love each other enough to be able start all over again together if we had to[10]'.

[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3 or 4 December 1888 (560).
[2] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 18-20 December 1888 (Merlhès 192).
[3] Jirat-Wasiutynski and Newton, 1991 (**D**).
[4] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), pp. 41 and 70.
[5] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, early October 1888 (545).
[6] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 29 September 1888 (543).
[7] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 17 January 1889 (571).
[8] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 28-29 October 1888 (558).
[9] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 20-22 November 1888 (563).
[10] Paul Gauguin: 'Natures mortes', *Essais d'art libre*, January 1894, p. 273 (for longer extracts, see *Blue Trees, 319*, inset, and *Little Cat, 321*, inset).
[11] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 22-23 January 1889 (573).
[12] Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, January 1889 (Cooper GAC 34).
[13] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 18-20 December 1888 (Merlhès 192).
[14] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 18-20 December 1888 (Merlhès 192).
[15] Paul Gauguin: *Avant et après*, 1903, p. 13.
[16] Van Gogh puns on 'Sane of mind/Holy Spirit'; one might render half the pun with 'Wholly sane/Holy spirit' [Translator's note]. Gauguin noted the pun in his sketchbook c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 220, and refers to it again in *Avant et après*, p. 11.
[17] Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, p. 262.
[18] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 23 June 1888 (B8).
[19] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 12 September 1888, in V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989, p. 87.
[20] E. Girard: 'Portraits du prochain siècle', *Essais d'art libre*, February 1894, p. 72.
[21] Vincent Van Gogh to Émile Bernard, 18-24 September 1888 (B16, for which see self-portrait *Les Misérables, 309*, **D**).
[22] M. Bailey: 'Van Gogh's *Portrait of Gauguin*', *Apollo*, July 1996, pp. 51-54.
[23] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, September 1889 (605).

Documents and bibliography:

Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3-4 December 1888 (560): see above.
Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 18-20 December 1888 (Merlhès 192): see above.
Theo to Johanna Van Gogh, 3 January 1889 (in B. Landais: 'Van Gogh. Mais qui résoudra le problème de la provenance des *Tournesols*', *Connaissance des arts*, May 1998, p. 46): states that Gauguin gave this portrait to Theo.
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 10 September 1889 (605): 'Have you seen the portrait that he did of me, painting sunflowers? My face has lightened up a lot since, but it was really me, terribly tired and charged up as I then was'.
Paul Gauguin: *Diverses choses*, pp. 261-262: on Van Gogh; mentions this picture. See above for extracts.
Paul Gauguin: *Avant et après*, 1903, pp. 8-16: on Van Gogh; see above and inset 'A Friendship' for extracts.
G.-D. de Monfreid: 'Sur Paul Gauguin', *L'Ermitage*, December 1903, p. 270.
Wildenstein, 1964, n. 296 (repr.).
J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and the Impressionists', *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, January-February 1973, p. 35.
D. Cooper: *Paul Gauguin. 45 lettres à Vincent, Théo et Jo Van Gogh*, The Hague and Lausanne, 1983, pp. 21 (repr.), 26.
R. Pickvance: *Van Gogh in Arles*, New York, 1984, pp. 25-30 (on Van Gogh's state of health).
V. Merlhès: *Paul Gauguin et Vincent Van Gogh. 1887-1888. Lettres retrouvées. Sources ignorées*, Taravao, 1989: this entire work enriches our understanding of the present painting.
V. Jirat-Wasiutynski and T. Newton: 'Tradition et innovation […]', *Actes du colloque Gauguin […] 1989*, Paris, 1991, pp. 75-76.

Exhibitions:

Vincent Van Gogh, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1905, no number.

A Friendship

The exchange of pictures in late 1887 was the first sign of mutual acknowledgement between Gauguin and Van Gogh. A correspondence of remarkable intensity had preceded their sharing a house in Arles (see Introductions to the Breton and Arles campaigns), and though Gauguin, in his prudence, was unwilling ever again to share quarters with Van Gogh, he never dreamed of letting the incident undermine his friendship. With Van Gogh, he had, he said, accomplished 'a colossal sum of work[1]'.
Their understanding was forged in mind and spirit. Van Gogh's example was a powerful inspiration in Gauguin's spiritual awakening; theirs was a shared ideal, a shared conception of the artist's destiny (see the *Vision, 308*, under 'The great awakening' and 'Van Gogh's artist-Christ'). It is in this context that their expressions of mutual respect and affection should be understood. Living in the same house had proved intolerable, but Gauguin, paying his respects to Van Gogh's profoundly intuitive nature, willingly avowed that 'He is a man of remarkable intelligence for whom I have great esteem[2]'. It was Van Gogh's clear understanding of the human heart that he thus esteemed. Van Gogh, in his turn, loved everything about Gauguin, his elder: 'in my opinion, the man is even finer than the artist', he told Russell[3], and to Aurier he wrote that 'my friend likes to have you feel that a good painting must be the equivalent of an act of goodness, not that he says so, but it is difficult to spend time in his company without being aware of a certain moral responsibility[4]'.
An almost religious artistic ideal inspired in them hopes of some sort of communal life and though the forms this was to take proved rather different, a spirit of brotherhood underpinned them. 'Vincent sometimes calls me the man who came from afar and will go far', Gauguin wrote, 'I hope I shall be able to take with me all those good hearts that have understood and loved me…[5]'. Van Gogh adds to this picture: 'Gauguin is very shy of showing the genius that inhabits him and it is touching how he likes to pass on something really useful to the young[6]'.
Each recognised in the other a similar longing for the absolute, a mystical aspiration of similar kind, though they approached it by different routes. And though neither was closely committed to a particular religion, they were united in their absolute admiration for Christ. Here again, it was certainly Van Gogh – not only through his letters but through the Christ-like aspect that Gauguin perceived in him – who sowed the seeds of Gauguin's attachment to the figure of Christ. A development of this finds its place in the philosophic-religious pages of Gauguin's *Diverses choses*.
Both were aware that they had chosen a life of suffering. 'My brother understands you and when he tells me that you, like me, are of the unhappy kind, he shows how well he understands us', Van Gogh told Gauguin[7]. And thus, despite their divergent characters and souls, theirs were, in a sense, parallel destinies. Van Gogh walked a road of fire, his life all but consecrated; the gravity of everyday life had a greater pull on Gauguin, whose route toward the same goal was one of quarrying through to the truth, while the storms of his existence lent it an almost expiatory value.
It is because of this fundamental kinship that no negative reaction or word can be taken completely serious, whereas the expressions of friendship and love remain entire. Van Gogh was determined, before he died, to make his farewells to Gauguin: 'The last letter I had was dated from Auvers, near Pontoise. He told me that he had hoped to get well enough to come and see me in Brittany, but that today he was forced to acknowledge that no cure was possible. / Dear Master (the only time that he ever used that word), it is a better thing after having known and hurt you to die in a good state than in a state that degrades you. / And he shot himself in the stomach with a pistol, and it was only some hours later, lying on his bed and smoking his pipe, that he died, still of clear mind, full of love for his art and without hatred of his fellow man. / In *Les Monstres*, Jean Dolent writes: "When Gauguin says "Vincent", he speaks softly[8]". Van Gogh too knew that they were indefeasibly joined, and promised, just a few days after the crisis in Arles: 'between us there is friendship forever[9]'.



V. Van Gogh: *Self-Portrait in Straw Hat*, summer 1887 (F469). Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).

[1] Paul Gauguin: *Avant et après*, 1903, p. 11.
[2] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, 3rd week of December 1888 (Merlhès 191).
[3] Van Gogh to Russell, January 1890 (623a).
[4] Van Gogh to Aurier, 12 February 1890 (626a).
[5] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 December 1888 (Merlhès 193).
[6] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, summer 1889 (607).
[7] Van Gogh to Gauguin, 22 January 1889 (Cooper VG/PG).
[8] Paul Gauguin: *Avant et après*, 1903, pp. 15-16. Gauguin refers to *Les Monstres*, Paris, 1896, a book by Jean Dolent. The original is neither capitalized nor italicised.
[9] Van Gogh to Gauguin, 22 January 1889 (Cooper VG/PG).

Internationale Kustausstellung *[des Sonderbundes…]*, Cologne, Städtische Ausstellungshalle, 1912, no. 154.
Moderne Kunst Kring, Suasso Municipal Museum (future Stedelijk Museum of Modern Art), Amsterdam, 1912, no. 19.
Vincent Van Gogh en zijn Tijdgenooten, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1930, no. 156.
Basel, Kunstmuseum, 1949-1950, no. 22.
Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1950, no. 2.
Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, and London, Tate Gallery, 1955, no. 26.
Palm Beach (Florida), Society of the Four Arts, 1956, no. 11.
Coral Gables (Florida), Joe and Emily Lowe Art Gallery, 1956, no. 9.
New York, Wildenstein, 1956, no. 11.
Collectie Theo Van Gogh, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, and Otterlo, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, 1960, no. 48.
Les Amis de Van Gogh, Paris, Institut néerlandais, 1960, no. 41.
Van Gogh et ses amis, Humlebaek (Denmark), Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 1961, no. 39.
Wegbereiter der modernen Malerei. Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Seurat, Hamburg, Kunstverein, 1963, no. 43.
Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group, London, Tate Gallery, 1966, no. 15.
Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven, Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1966, no. 14.
Europäischer Expressionismus, Munich, Haus der Kunst, and Paris, Musée national d'Art moderne, 1970, no. 4.
Cincinnati (Ohio), Cincinnati Art Museum, 1971, no. 17.
Œuvres écrites de Gauguin et Van Gogh, Paris, Institut néerlandais, 1975, no. 119.

Provenance:

Given, as soon as it was finished, by Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh: see above, and letters of 18-20 December 1888 (Merlhès 192) and 3 January 1889, **D** above. It is just possible that Theo brought this painting back to Paris after his rapid trip to Arles on 25 December 1888.
Johanna Van Gogh-Bonger, 1891.
V.W. Van Gogh, Laren (Netherland), 1925.
Lent by V.W. Van Gogh to the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in 1930, where the work remained until the creation of the Van Gogh Museum.
Vincent Van Gogh Stichting, Amsterdam, 1962; exhibited since 1973 at:
Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum – S225V/1962.



327

327
Portrait of Madame Roulin

Canvas. 0.490 × 0.625.
Signed lower centre-left: *P Go*
W298

No document informing us of the painting of this portrait has come to light.
By contrast, we know that Van Gogh painted every member of the Roulin family, starting around late November and continuing on into December. On the third or fourth of that month, he wrote 'Here too it's winter though there is still excellent weather from time to time […]. I've done portraits of a whole family, that of the *facteur* whose head I'd already done – the man, the wife, the baby, the young lad and the son of 16, all types and very French though they look like Russians. No. 15 canvases[1]'. Gauguin's portrait is also a no. 15, though it is a normal canvas and not the jute used for so many Arles works (see *Les Alyscamps, 316*, inset). It is, as it were, Gauguin's contribution to the series undertaken by Van Gogh, and it, too, might date from December, given that the winter weather no doubt favoured indoor work.
Gauguin turned his friend's almost invariable portrait-format on its side – only Van



Studies for the portrait of Mme Roulin, sketches. Gauguin's sketchbook, p. 79. Jerusalem, Israel Museum.



Mme Roulin (in Tralbaut, 1969).

Gogh's *Portrait of Mme Roulin* F503 is, like this one, in landscape format. In its compositional choices, that painting closely resembles the present work, and the consensus is that, in this case, Van Gogh was following in Gauguin's footsteps.
Augustine Alix Roulin – maiden name Pellicot – was born on 9 October 1851 and died on 5 April 1930. In 1868, she married the *facteur* whom Van Gogh liked so much and whom Gauguin had depicted in the background of his *Night Café, 318* (q.v.). She was surely as profoundly good-natured as her husband; this is the impression given by the photo of her taken in her old age and published by Priou (**D**). The two artists brought out rather different sides of her personality; she seems more kindly in Van Gogh's portrait than in Gauguin's, though the latter allowed her very handsome eyes. She was thirty-seven when Gauguin painted her, having on 31 July of that year given birth to a baby, Marcelle, whom Van Gogh portrayed (F491) and Gauguin sketched in his notebook[2].
Mme Roulin is dressed in green in both paintings, and seems, in both paintings, to be sitting in the same wooden chair with shaped back (slightly simplified by Gauguin) and rounded arms, the latter clearly visible in Van Gogh's F508; this may, indeed, be the one painted by Van Gogh as 'Gauguin's Chair' (see F499, in the introduction 'With Vincent in Arles'). The lack of furniture, and above all the presence in the background of a recent painting, *Blue Trees (319)*[3], indicate that Mme Roulin came to pose in the painters' studio.
On the basis of the contrasting play of shadow on the face and wall, Pickvance goes so far as to suggest that Gauguin followed Van Gogh's lead and painted this portrait by the light of the gas-lamp with which Van Gogh had equipped the little house[4]; Van Gogh had for some time been interested in painting by artificial light.
On page 79 of Gauguin's 1888-1890 sketchbook, there is a drawing of one of Mme Roulin's eyes and an outline of her head, seen from the same angle but facing the other way[5].

[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 3-4 December 1888 (560).
[2] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 55.
[3] Identified by Roskill, 1970 (**D**).
[4] Pickvance, 1984 (**D**).
[5] Huyghe, 1952, p. 79.

Documents and bibliography:

J.-N. Priou: 'Van Gogh et la famille Roulin', *Revue des P.T.T. de France*, May-June 1955, pp. 26-32 (reprinted in *Arts*, 31 August 1955, p. 6): photo of Mme Roulin, and her dates of birth, death and marriage.
V.W. Van Gogh: 'Mme Roulin. La berceuse par Vincent Van Gogh and Gauguin', *Museumjournal* (Amsterdam), 1955, vol. 1, no. 13, p. 59 (repr.): identification of the model.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 298 (repr.).
W. Roskill: *Van Gogh, Gauguin and the Impressionist Circle*, London, 1970, pp. 150, 154, pl. 150.
R. Pickvance: *Van Gogh in Arles*, New York, 1984, pp. 223-230 (repr.), 246-247: on the Roulin family and the series of portraits.



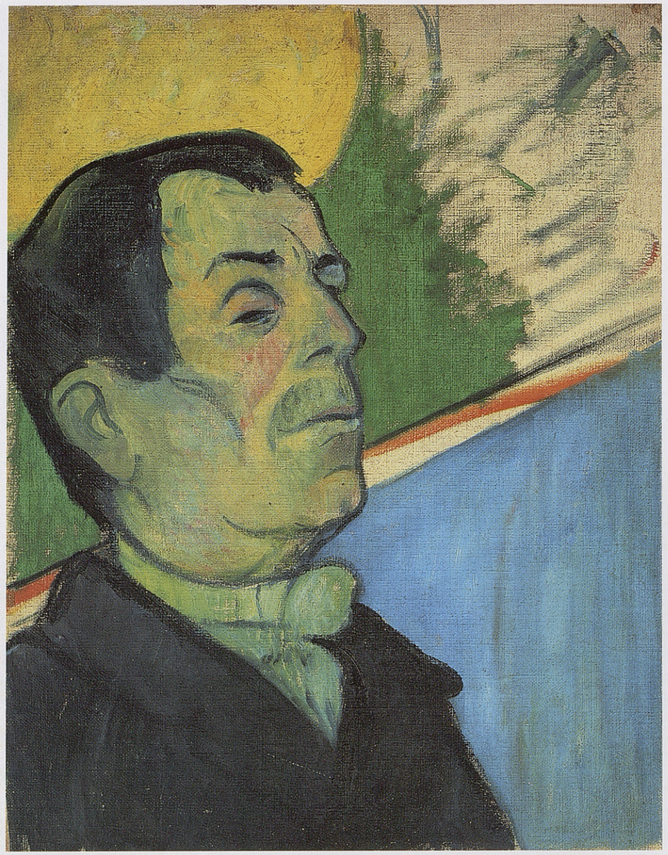
V. Van Gogh: *Portrait of Mme Roulin* (F503). Winterthur, Collection Oskar Reinhart, 'Am Römerholz'.

Exhibitions:

(?) *Peintures du groupe impressionniste et synthétiste*, Paris, Exposition universelle, Volpini premises on the Champ-de-Mars, summer 1889, no. 46 *(Portrait, Arles)*.
Probably: *Die Klassische Malerei Frankreichs im 19. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt-am-Main, Frankfurter Kunstverein, 1912, no. 54 – *Arlesian Woman*, for sale.
Van Gogh in Arles, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1984, no. 137.

Provenance:

Presumably: Roulin, Arles – this painting would seem to have been given by Gauguin to the model, since Vollard, who, according to J.-N. Priou (**D** above), around 1895 bought the whole series of portraits from the Roulin family for FF 450, owned this one.
In any case: Vollard.
Sale [of M.M., deceased], Paris, Drouot, 31 May 1956, no. 16.
Bought in 1959 with funds donated by Mrs Mark C. Steinberg, St. Louis (Missouri), in 1959, by: **St. Louis (Missouri), The St. Louis Art Museum, Funds given by Mrs Mark C. Steinberg – 5: 1959.**



328

328
Portrait of a Man Wearing a *Lavallière*[1]

Canvas. 0.40 × 0.31

After they had, side-by-side, painted Mme Ginoux (see *Night Café, 318*), Gauguin and Van Gogh did the same with this unknown model, who is depicted in the same pose and the same costume by Van Gogh in his F533; Van Gogh again positioned himself slightly to the right of Gauguin.
Their interpretations are noticeably different, with green-yellow predominating in the Van Gogh, and blue, yellow and green in the Gauguin. One wonders whether the 'rim' visible in the background is the frame of a picture *Portrait of Madame Roulin (327)*, in which case the model probably came, like Mesdames Ginoux and Roulin, to pose in the little yellow house.
The identity of the sitter remains mysterious. His features are perhaps not those of a commoner. The suggestion that he is Monsieur Ginoux seems unlikely, given that he is shown in Van Gogh's *Night Café* (F463, reproduced in *Night Café, 318*) as quite different. Ginoux was then fifty-two, and Van Gogh depicts him as moustachioed, with grey locks and a white jacket buttoned tight up around a strict black cravat. We do not know whether the title *Portrait of an Actor* long borne by Van Gogh's painting is owed to the model's appearance or to an oral tradition within the Van Gogh family.
The range of exceptionally light colours here borders on the acid, and is close to that of Van Gogh, which suggests (*Public Garden* is a similar case) a date relatively late in Gauguin's Arles campaign. This painting was long regarded as anonymous, and finally attributed to Gauguin by Douglas Cooper.



V. Van Gogh: *Portrait* (F533). Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum Collection.

[1] A *lavallière* is a loosely tied bow-tie [Translator's note].

Documents and bibliography:

This painting is perhaps one of the studies cited in the three following letters:
Gauguin to Vincent Van Gogh, January 1889 (Cooper GAC 35): 'Don't bother about the studies that I deliberately left in Arles because they weren't worth transporting'.
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 17 January 1889 (571): 'He requests a sunflower picture, offering in exchange, I suppose, or as a gift, some studies that he left here. I'll send back his studies'.
Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 1 or 2 May 1889 (589): 'The packing case [sent by Vincent to Theo] contains studies by Gauguin, which belong to him'.
At all events: W. Roskill: *Van Gogh, Gauguin and the Impressionist Circle,* London, 1970, p. 154, pl. 157.
D. Cooper: *Paul Gauguin. 45 lettres à Vincent, Théo et Jo Van Gogh,* The Hague and Lausanne, 1983, pp. 21-22 (repr.), 257.

Exhibitions:

Collectie Theo Van Gogh, Otterlo, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, 1960, no. 107 (given to an 'unknown painter').
Van Gogh et Arles, Arles, former hôpital Van Gogh, 1989, no. 32.

Provenance:
According to Cooper, this painting might be one of the studies left in Arles by Gauguin in late December, and sent back by Vincent to Theo Van Gogh in May 1889. Perhaps Gauguin never picked them up from Theo, which might explain their presence in the Van Gogh brothers' collection.
Vincent and Theo Van Gogh, Paris.
Johanna Van Gogh-Bonger, 1891.
V.W. Van Gogh, Laren (Netherlands), 1925.
Lent by V.W. Van Gogh to the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in 1930, where the work remained until the creation of the Van Gogh Museum.
Vincent Van Gogh Stichting, Amsterdam, 1962; exhibited since 1973 at:
Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum – S256V/1962.

329
Arlésiennes, Mistral or Public Garden, Arles

Canvas. 0.73 × 0.92
Signed and dated lower left:
P Gauguin 88
W300

The title *Arlésiennes, Mistral* comes from Gauguin's 1888-1890 sketchbook[1].
We have no documentary evidence about the painting of this work, but everything points to it being from December, not least the very fact of it not being mentioned, since the correspondence tells us little or nothing about the two artists' work in December (see Introduction to this period), and this is one of the few works that can be proposed for that period – about which we know relatively little. Moreover, the conical straw mats used to protect young trees from the cold also suggest that this is a winter scene. Finally, the disquieting atmosphere that this work seems to breathe might also tempt us to see in it a work from late in the year, a point to which we shall return.
The extreme *Japonisme* of this work also pleads in favour of a late date; in its flattening out of perspective and division into areas of pure colour, it is one of the most advanced of Gauguin's Arles works. More lyrical on the right-hand side of the painting, the colours



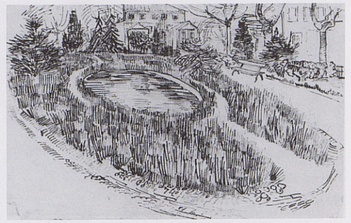
329

have benefited from Gauguin's experiments in *Blue Trees* (*319*, see inset), though they also derive from complementary harmonies of the kind favoured by Van Gogh (see *Fête Gloanec, 301*, inset on complementaries). Indeed, this work takes Van Gogh's ideas about 'Japanese' surfaces (see *Wrestlers, 298*, inset on *Japonisme*) to their logical conclusion – going further in this respect, perhaps, than Van Gogh himself ever did: the surfaces often lack both perspective and modulation and are only very lightly outlined, while the whole of the left side is governed by an all but vertical layering of space.

Women out walking in gardens ■ The painting is clearly composed 'from the head', according to the theory then prevailing (see *Human Misery, 317*, inset), yet it was inspired by aspects of something perfectly real, the municipal gardens of place Lamartine which lay more or less directly below the windows of the artists' house.

Gauguin's 1888-1890 sketchbook contains a whole series of very simple sketches made for use in this picture: the pond, the fountain and a branch of the weeping willow, one of the straw-matting coats worn by the trees, a *coiffe*, and a bench[2]. The same sketchbook contains preparatory drawings of the women, which were taken not from nature but from earlier works[3]. Mme Ginoux of *Night Café (318)*, with her centrally parted hairstyle, is reversed for the figure in the foreground, and the two Arlésiennes of *Les Alyscamps (314)* are borrowed for the background pair.

A great many drawings and paintings by Van Gogh executed between spring and October show us the place Lamartine gardens, in which



V. Van Gogh: *Public Garden*, pen drawing (F1513). In the background, the 'yellow house'. Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).



V. Van Gogh: *Public Garden* (F1465), pen drawing after a painting hung in Gauguin's room. Photo: Sotheby's.

we recognise certain components of Gauguin's painting; they also allow us to appreciate the 'abstract' fashion in which he has reordered the garden's spaces. Thus the drawing F1513 depicts a little oval pond and the park bench looking out over it; benches of the same kind feature in F566 and F472. Above all, there is the 'feathery round bush' that was, in Pickvance's words, 'to attract Van Gogh more than any other single natural form during his stay in Arles[4]', and which appears, he tells us, in some ten paintings and a similar number of drawings between spring and October. Among these, we should highlight two works from the series 'The Poet's Garden', which were specially made toward September-October to decorate Gauguin's room: F468 and a painting that has disappeared, represented by the drawing F1465, of which the spherical bush was the central feature. A letter of 26 or 27 September, in which Van Gogh describes this unknown work at length, recreates the contemplative and profoundly intuitive – almost animistic – attention that he had brought to bear on this corner of the park with its round cedar[5]. There is therefore some reason to think that, unlike the straw matting, which Gauguin very likely saw in the garden, the presence of the round cedar may have been suggested to Gauguin by Van Gogh's work. We shall return to this immortal shrub.

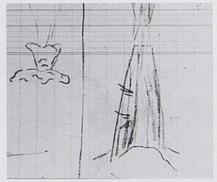
Memories ■ But though this painting adopts a subject similar to those of Van Gogh's 'realist' series of park-paintings, its overall composition clearly owes still more to his *Memory of the Garden at Etten* (F496), with which it is almost a pair. Van Gogh had painted this in mid-November, and it had, in its turn, been conceived in the spirit of Symbolism and by methods (painting 'from the head') directly inspired by Gauguin. In similar fashion, veiled persons pass silently before the spectator as if to exit stage right; they emerge from a background combining the sinuous and the protuberant (a variant using similar elements is to be seen in the background of Van Gogh's *Portrait of Madame Roulin*, F503, reproduced opposite Gauguin's portrait, *327*). The prevailing atmosphere in both works is that of sadness, and both seem pregnant with meaning.







Sketches for the painting. Gauguin's sketchbook, pp. 60, 51, and 56. Jerusalem, Israel Museum.





Sketches for the painting. Gauguin's sketchbook, pp. 52 and 57. Jerusalem, Israel Museum.

Sterility, rejection, anguish ■ As to the symbolic purport of the works, Van Gogh's *Garden* clearly evokes a deep-lying memory, whereas Gauguin's is much more ambiguous. Yet Gauguin offers us one clue in the title he bestowed on a zincograph (Guérin 11) that



V. Van Gogh: *Memory of the Garden at Etten*, November 1888 (F496). For colour reproduction, see page 512. St. Petersburg, Hermitage Museum.

he made a few weeks later: *Old Maids*. And everything does indeed point to a refusal of sexuality: in the right hand part of the painting, which is full of warm colours, there is the glowing red fence, and the phallic straw coats, whose gilded forms stand out gloriously against the reflected sky. To the left, turning their backs on this spectacle, the funereal procession passes gravely down the pale gravel path, beneath the branches swayed by the wind. In the background are the figures derived from the Arlésiennes of *314*, whom Gauguin ironically designated 'the three graces of the temple of Venus[6]'. As they come toward us, they reveal their resigned, anaemic faces, reaching a sort of crescendo at the bush in the foreground, in which Bodelsen has detected gazing eyes[7].

And it is true: the sketching out, on the fence side of the bush, of a morose, naïve and listless eye, and, on the left, similarly sketchy, a gaze apparently on the brink of horror and madness, makes this formless being close kin to the one secreted in one of the sunflowers in the portrait of Van Gogh, *326*. It perhaps also prefigures the vague and rather metaphorical ceramic self-portrait of a few months later (Gray 66, reproduced at *Portrait of Madeleine Bernard, 305*, inset 'Gauguin and Madeleine after Pont-Aven'), or the drawing of a haystack with a human face in the Musée de Reims, which is also a sort of self portrait.

The question then is, can any precise meaning be attached to the painting as a whole? A first question might be, whether Gauguin's choice of 'old maids' as subjects reflects his own resentment or anguish. Gauguin's stay in Arles does not seem to have produced any particular frustration. The issue that Gauguin defined as 'hygiene and coitus[8]' was solved by the simplest of methods, a share of money being put aside in a special box for 'hygienic nocturnal strolls[9]'. Moreover, their 'feverish' pace of work cannot have left Gauguin much time for a particular interest in any one Arlésienne; he later noted 'I could never work up much enthusiasm [for Arlésiennes][10]'. As to Mme Ginoux, who had, by all accounts, nothing of the spinster about her (see *Night Café, 318*), it seems likely that she appears here merely because Gauguin had few other feminine faces in his Arles repertoire.

The female condition ■ It seems then that there is no allusion here to specific difficulties encountered in Arles. There is, however, a chain of thought in which the subject of this painting might find its place: that which led Gauguin, over the course of the years, to express and repeat his repugnance at the way in which natural female sexuality was denied. Thus he (much later) deemed the condition of nuns depressing: 'I feel sad and disgusted



Old Maids, zincograph (Guérin 11). Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

at the passage of this flock of unhealthy, unhygienic virgins[11]'. And the principles that he sought to instil in his daughter were radical ones: 'Women want to be free. / That is their right. And certainly men do not stand in their way. The day women's honour is no longer placed below the waist, they will be free. And perhaps healthier too[12]'.

Such thinking was by no means unique in Gauguin's time. In a bourgeois society in which hypocritical prudishness held sway, the slow but irresistible movement toward a more liberal morality was gaining pace and continued to do so throughout the twentieth century. In the 1880s, this hypocrisy was beginning to come under attack from a number of intellectuals, from, for example, Edmond de Goncourt and Guy de Maupassant; Gauguin must often have read Maupassant's lively columns in *Gil Blas, Le Gaulois* and *Le Figaro*. New ideas about free love were arriving from Scandinavia (on which, see *Portrait of Ingeborg Thaulow, 44*, inset).

Gauguin's views on women thus coincide with contemporary developments; but they also form part of his own personal thinking on sexuality, a subject which had preoccupied him for some time. After the 1887 *Two Women Bathing (241)*, in which a young virgin debates whether to take the fateful step, several 1888 paintings take up this subject: *Fruit (312)*, *Human Misery (317)* and *Woman with Pigs (320)*.

The old maids of the present painting might therefore be the archetypal opposites of the creature depicted in *Human Misery*, who, though she has sinned, seems eminently worthy of pardon. And perhaps they also prefigure the emaciated figure, drained of all generosity, that Gauguin presented the following year on the right-hand side of *Life and Death* (now identified with W335), a clearly Symbolist work conveying quite specific views, not all of which have yet been elucidated.

A sense of unease ■ We have, however, no proof that so conscious a system of thought underpins *Public Garden*; there are no contemporary documents suggesting that Gauguin was then giving much thought to this form of refusal of life. On the other hand, it is clear that, though it also comprises some of that strangeness by which Gauguin was preoccupied in Arles (see *Near Arles, 323*, inset), this painting expresses a sense of pitiful distress.

But to whom should we attribute this distress, and, in particular, the suffering manifested by the bush in the foreground? It might be that

of Van Gogh, who was so closely associated with this particular plant, and who was doubtless macerating in a sexual isolation as intense as that of the 'old maids' in the picture. Van Gogh might, moreover, have confessed to Gauguin what he had shortly before revealed to Theo: 'Do you remember in Guy de Maupassant the man who hunted rabbits […] who […] had worn himself out so completely running after them, that when he came to marry he could no longer get it up […]. / I'm not in his position as regards having or wanting to marry, but on the physical side I'm beginning to resemble him[13]'. On the other hand, Van Gogh himself later confided that Gauguin 'was equally tired during his stay by I know not what malaise[14]', so the malaise may be simply be that of Gauguin living alongside Van Gogh.

Whatever the case, we see in this painting an attempt to take the measure of – and exorcise – the uneasy atmosphere pervading Gauguin's stay in Arles: the cold, the funereal auspices, the solitude and the underlying schizophrenia and madness are confronted, on the right hand side of the work, by a reminder of more joyous matters.

A reminiscence of the layered depths and pointy vertical elements in this picture was soon to emerge in a very successful zincograph by Bernard: *Stroll*.



É. Bernard: *Out Walking*, zincograph. Private collection.

[1] Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952) (**D**).
[2] Huyghe, 1952, pp. 52, 56, 57, 60 (**D**).
[3] Huyghe, 1952, p. 51 (**D**).
[4] Pickvance, 1984, p. 64 (**D**).
[5] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 26 or 27 September 1888 (541).
[6] Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh, c. 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 183), cf. *Les Alyscamps (314)*, **D**.
[7] Bodelsen, 1964, p. 104 (**D**).
[8] Gauguin to Émile Schuffenecker, 22 November 1888 (Merlhès 184).
[9] Paul Gauguin: *Avant et après*, p. 11.
[10] *Avant et après*, p. 9.
[11] *Avant et après*, p. 101.
[12] Paul Gauguin: *Cahier pour Aline*, 1893, p. 9.
[13] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 9 July 1888 (506).
[14] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 17 February 1889 (577).

Documents and bibliography:
Gauguin's sketchbook, c. 1888-1890 (Huyghe, 1952), p. 223: '[sold to] Van Gog* Arlésiennes (mistral) [FF] 300'. This sale may precede a transaction of June 1889 noted on the following line, though the notes are not necessarily contemporary with sales.
Y. Thirion: 'L'influence de l'estampe japonaise dans l'œuvre de Gauguin', *GBA*, special Gauguin number, January-April 1956 (published 1958), p. 107.
Wildenstein, 1964, no. 300 (repr.).
M. Bodelsen: *Gauguin's Ceramics*, London, 1964, p. 104.
J. Rewald: 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and The Impressionists', *GBA*, 1973, pp. 35-37 (repr.), 63, note 82.
R. Pickvance: *Van Gogh in Arles*, New York, 1984, pp. 216-217 (repr.).

Exhibitions:
(?) *De Delacroix à Gauguin*, Berlin, Hugo Perls, 1925, no. 14 (*The Arles Asylum*).
Basel, Kunsthalle, 1928, no. 39 or 44 (depending on the edition).
Berlin, Thannhauser, 1928, no. 30.
San Francisco, California, San Francisco Museum of Art, 1936, no. 61.
Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago, and New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1959, no. 13.
Cincinnati (Ohio), Cincinnati Art Museum, 1971, no. 18.
Post-Impressionism, London, Royal Academy of Arts, 1979-1980, no. 86.
Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Toronto (Ontario), Art Gallery of Ontario, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, 1981, no. 55.
Van Gogh in Arles, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1984, no. 127.
Washington D.C., Chicago and Paris, 1988-1989, no. 58.

Provenance:
Sold by Gauguin to Theo Van Gogh for FF 300, perhaps during the first half of 1889 (see Gauguin's sketchbook, **D** above).
Émile Schuffenecker: his daughter Jeanne claims that this work belonged to him.
Thannhauser, Lucerne, c. 1923 (no. 1167 according to a German-language notebook).
James W. Barney, New York, c. 1929.
De Hauke, New York, c. 1930.
Jacques Seligman, New York, 1931.
Mr and Mrs Lewis L. Coburn, Chicago, 1932.
Given in 1934 by Annie Swan Coburn to:
Chicago (Illinois), The Art Institute of Chicago, Mr and Mrs Lewis Larned Coburn Memorial Collection – 1934-391.

330
Self Portrait, Arles

Work known only through documentary proof.

On leaving the hospital where he had been taken after the crisis of 23 December, Vincent Van Gogh asked his brother: 'Have you seen the portrait Gauguin's done of himself these last few days? / If you compared the portrait he made of himself then with the one I still have of him [*309*], the one he sent me from Brittany in exchange for mine, you'd see that personally he has, all things considered, grown calmer here[1]'. The portrait was therefore painted around the third week of December 1888. Theo had come to Arles on 25 December to ensure his brother was in safe hands, and might have seen the work in the yellow house with the rest of the two artists' recent productions. Gauguin no doubt took it away with him (along with almost all his other works) when he left Arles definitively for Paris on 26 December, since Van Gogh's letter contrasts this work with 'the one I still have' (*309*).

What happened to it thereafter we do not know. It was for a long time identified with W297, but this cannot be sustained in the face of the observation (made by the authors of the catalogue of the *Gauguin* exhibition of 1988-1989) that in the background of W297 an inverted reflection of the 1889 painting *Ondine* (W336) undoubtedly appears[2].

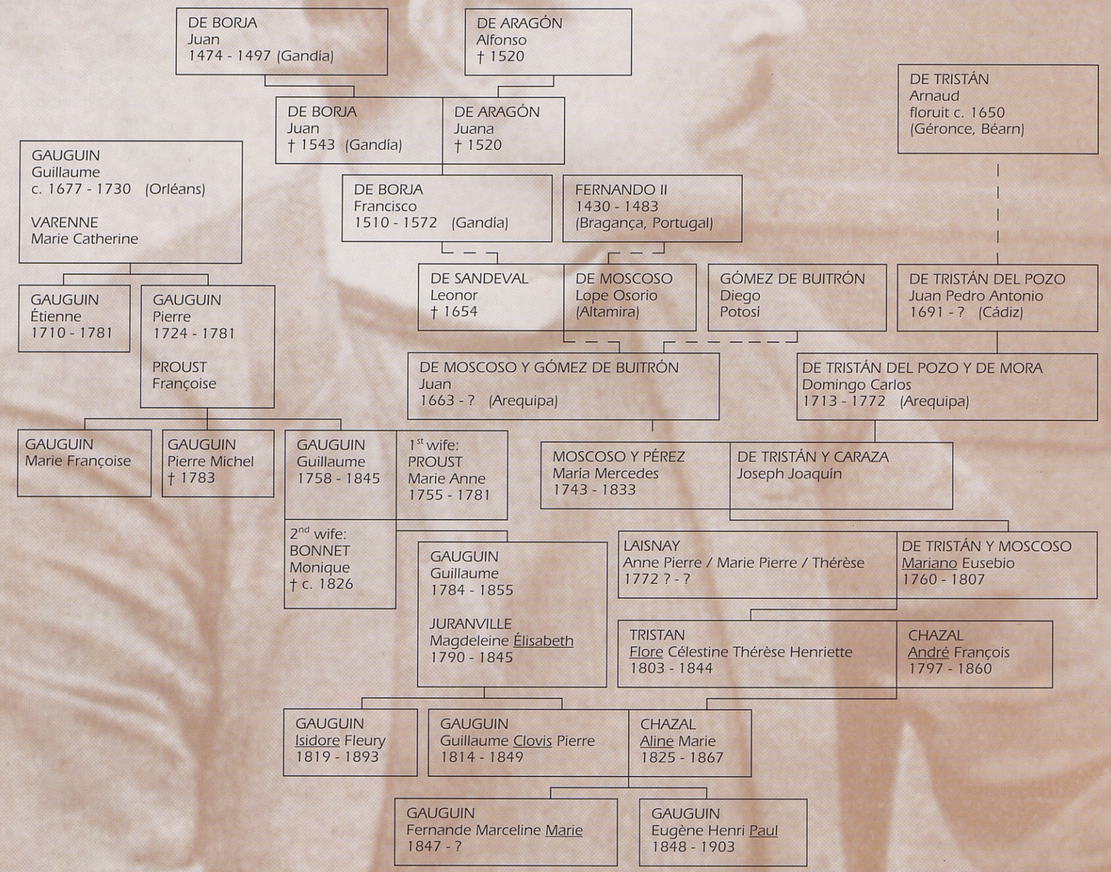
[1] Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 9 January 1889 (570).
[2] F. Cachin: 'Gauguin vu par lui-même et quelques autres', p. 20 of this catalogue, and I. Cahn: 'Les Gauguin dans Gauguin', *Actes du colloque Gauguin […] 1989*, Paris, 1991, p. 174.

Provenance:
Disappeared. This work seems to have left no other trace of its existence, and a question arises whether Gauguin painted over it.

Blue Trees (319), detail. ▶



Gauguin's Genealogy



Key:
—— First generation
- - - - Over several generations

Chronology

The chronological order is sometimes disturbed where a) we were able to situate an event only within a certain date-range, or b) we have cited related occurrences at the date of a key event.

Our intention was to set the scene for Gauguin and his friends within the context of the century by which they were moulded. Economic and social developments contributed to this period's political density, which found its counterpart in an extraordinary cultural flowering, scientific no less than artistic. In general, politics has been cited first, then culture.

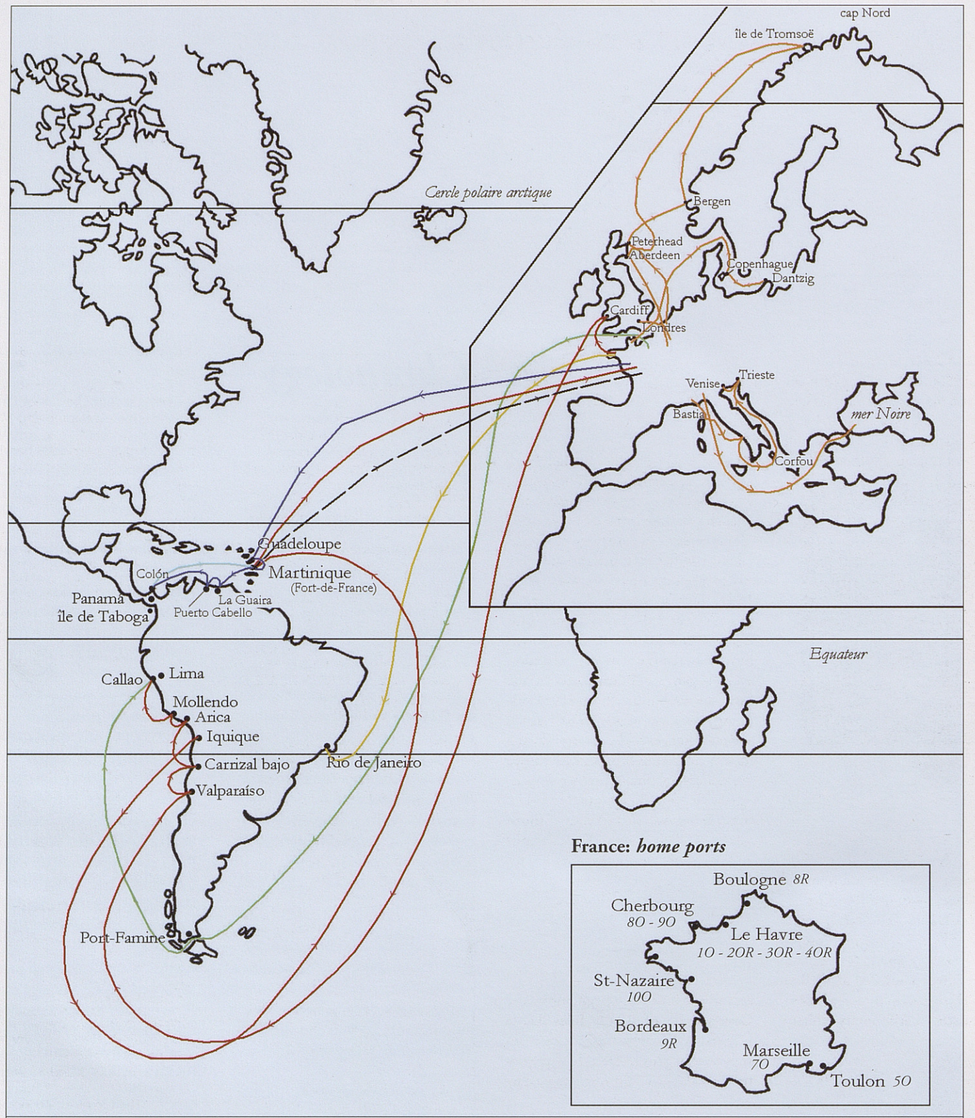
Bibliographical references take the form 'name, date', '*title of exhibition catalogue*/date', and in the case of anonymous articles '*journal*, date'; full forms can be found in the *Selective Bibliography*.

To aid the reader, text concerning Gauguin himself appears in bold. On the right-hand page, a chronology of the period occupies one or more columns, with cultural events presented between two rules.

Abbreviations specific to the Chronology:
Avant et Après, see GAUGUIN'S SKETCHBOOKS AND WRITINGS
L'Aventure de ma vie, see BERNARD (Émile) in DOCUMENTS.
A.D.: Archives départementales
A.N.: Archives nationales
A.P.: Archives parisiennes
C.A.D.N.: Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes.
ABC 1942/1950: cf. SÉRUSIER (Paul)
Cogniat-Rewald sketchbook and Huyghe sketchbook: see GAUGUIN'S SKETCHBOOKS AND WRITINGS
PSU: Pennsylvania State University, University Park, see DOCUMENTS
'Merlhès, 1989' refers to *Lettres retrouvées…*; cf. *Selective Bibliography*

Archive names have been partly translated in order to give the non-Francophone reader some notion of the nature of the evidence cited; the original names are cited in the **Archive** section of the bibliography.

Gauguin's Sea Voyages 1848-1888



The voyages (**O**: *outward*, **R**: *return leg*) are represented by a number, the ships by a colour.

1:O. On the *Albert (in green)*: Le Havre-Punta Arenas-Lima.

2:OR and 3:OR. On the *Luzitano (in yellow)*: Le Havre-Rio de Janeiro-Le Havre.

4:OR. On the *Chili (in red)*: *outward*: Le Havre-Cardiff-Valparaíso-Carrizal Bajo-Arica-Mollendo-Callao; *return*: Iquique-Fort-de-France-Le Havre.

5:O. On the *Jérôme-Napoléon (in gold)*: Toulon-Eastern Mediterranean-Black Sea.

6. On the *Jérôme-Napoléon (in gold)*: English Channel-up the Thames to London.

7:O. On the *Jérôme-Napoléon (in gold)*: Marseilles-Bastia-Naples-Corfu-Trieste-Venice.

8:O and 8:R. On the *Jérôme-Napoléon (in gold)*: *outward*: Cherbourg-Peterhead-Bergen-Tromsö; *return*: Aberdeen-Boulogne.

9:O and 9:R. On the *Jérôme-Napoléon* renamed *Desaix (in gold)*: Cherbourg-Danish and German waters as far as Danzig[Gdansk]-Copenhagen-Bordeaux.

10:O. On the *Canada (in blue)*: Saint-Nazaire-Guadeloupe-Fort-de-France-La Guaira-Puerto Cabello-Savanilla(?)-Colón.

11. On the *Amérique* or the *Lesseps (in pale blue)*: Colón-Fort-de-France.

12. On an unidentified ship *(dotted black)*: Martinique-France.

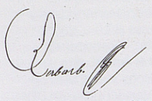
Chronology of the life of Paul Gauguin and the painters and art-dealers close to him

15 June 1846
At the mairie of the 1st arrondissement of Paris, the marriage of Clovis Gauguin, 'man of letters', domiciled at 3 Rue Le Peletier, and Aline Chazal, still a minor and unemployed, domiciled



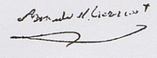
Aline Gauguin, painting by Jules Laure, 1848. Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental Maurice Denis 'Le Prieuré'.

at 70 Rue de Chaillot, the home of Monsieur Bascans, teacher. The groom's witnesses are Armand Marrast, journalist, aged forty-five, domiciled at 52 Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, and Édouard Albert François Joseph Degouve Denuncques, landowner, aged thirty-five, domiciled at 10 Rue Blanche. The bride's witnesses are Benjamin Labarbe, Paris notary, thirty-



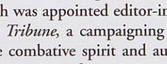
Benjamin Labarbe's signature, 1846.

eight years of age, domiciled at 19 Rue de la Monnaie, and Jules Laure, history painter, aged forty, domiciled at 8 Rue Vivienne (A.P., reconstituted registry office archives, Marriage series, 1846, no. 545).



Armand Marrast's signature, 1846.

Marrast (1801-1852), who had taken an active role in the 1830 Revolution, was a member of the *parti radical*, and as such was appointed editor-in-chief of *La Tribune*, a campaigning paper whose combative spirit and audacity led to a string of convictions. After 1841, Marrast became editor-in-chief of *Le National*, the paper of choice for republican opinion. There he showed himself much more moderate, and in 1848 began a political career at the highest level. Bascans (born 1801), one of the insurgents of July 1830, was the valiant manager of *La Tribune* during its very numerous brushes with justice (he was several times fined and imprisoned). In 1840, he returned to teaching. Degouve Denuncques (born 1810), a liberal, wrote for reformist dailies before being nominated for



Joseph Degouve Denuncques' signature, 1846.

senior administrative positions by the Government of 1848. Jules Laure (1806-1861), who could number Ingres among his masters, had his portraits and history paintings accepted by



Jules Laure's signature, 1846.

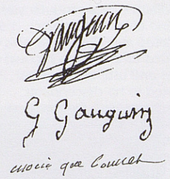
the Salon from 1834 until his death. The address given by Clovis, 3 Rue Le Peletier, is that of the headquarters of *Le National* and the Prost printworks.

Paternal Line

Gauguin's paternal stock was based in and around Orleans. The Étude généalogique Coutot-Roehrig was able to trace it back to the sixth generation.

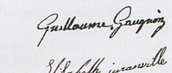
Guillaume Gauguin, vinegrower, born c. 1677 (died 1730) and Marie Catherine Varenne had two sons, the elder named Étienne (1710-1781).
The younger, Pierre Gauguin (1724-1781), married Françoise Proust on 11 February 1749. They had a daughter, Marie Françoise, and two sons. One, Pierre Michel, died young, in 1783 (A.D., Loiret, Gauguin-Juranville donation-distribution, 1853).

The other son, Guillaume, baptised 15 April 1758, 'gardener', on 20 February 1781 married Marie Anne Proust (1755-1781),



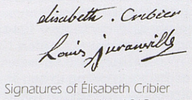
Signatures of Guillaume Gauguin, 2nd of that name, 1813 and 1838, and Monique Bonnet, 1813.

like him an inhabitant of the Orleans parish of Saint-Marceau. Widowed two months after the wedding, he married again on 17 February 1783; the bride was Monique Bonnet, daughter of Michel Bonnet and Marie Anne Laloue. On 27 December 1825, the couple bought a house at 22 Rue des Anguignis in Orleans, probably from the Gauguin-Proust parents – and not from their late grandparents Guillaume and Marie Catherine Gauguin, who were no doubt cited by the notary because they had been the house's first buyers (A.D., Loiret, Gauguin-Juranville donation-distribution, 1853).
Their son, baptised 1 September 1784, also named Guillaume, was the future grandfather of the painter. On 14 April 1813, in Sandillon, he married Magdeleine Élisabeth Juranville, who was born



Signatures of Guillaume Gauguin, 3rd of that name, and Élisabeth Juranville, 1813.

on 21 January 1790 in the hamlet of Loiret (in the *commune* of Jargeau) to Marie Magdeleine Élisabeth Cribier and Louis Juranville, wood-turner and bushel-maker. The marriage



Signatures of Élisabeth Cribier and Louis Juranville, 1813.

contract shows that both bride and groom received a dowry from their parents, Guillaume FF 2,000, Élisabeth FF 1,000 and 84 ares 40 centiares (8440 m²) of vines and lucerne. Their joint estate included the FF 3,000 along with FF 1,000 drawn on the value of the land, while the remainder – of unknown worth – was to belong to the bride alone (A.D., Loiret, 5 April 1813).
Élisabeth went to live with her husband at her in-laws' home,

which was probably already at this point 9 Rue Dauphine: this house had been bought by the Gauguin-Bonnets in 1798, and included a shop on the place de la Croix Saint-Marceau and an outhouse, as befitted Guillaume Gauguin junior's profession, that of grocer (A.D., Loiret, Gauguin-Juranville donation-distribution, 1853).
There, in 1819, their second son was born. The two families seem to have shared the house thereafter, even after the death of Monique around 1826 (A.D., Loiret, discharge of loan by Gauguin-Bonnet, 25 January 1842; Gauguin-Juranville donation-distribution, 1853).
On 8 August 1835, the Gauguin-Juranvilles purchased at auction a house at 31 quai Neuf Tudelle, in Orleans, and on 6 November 1843, Guillaume Gauguin senior, the former gardener and now, at 85, landowner, bought a contiguous house at 10 Rue Tudelle. Gauguin-Juranville, by then 60 years old, seems to have retired at this point and moved with his wife and father into the two-house Tudelle residence.
Élisabeth died there on 23 May 1845, followed shortly afterwards by Gauguin-Bonnet, who died on 23 December 1845. (A.D., Loiret, extension of term of loan by Gauguin-Juranville, 25-29 November 1844; Gauguin-Juranville donation-distribution, 1853; mairie d'Orléans, register of deaths, 1845, no. 632).

The notarial documents show that the Gauguin line grew substantially richer, accumulating wealth with every new generation, thanks to there being only a single descendant in each case, this often being the result of the premature death of a sibling.
The Gauguin-Bonnets inherited FF 9,300 in real estate, and themselves acquired FF 23,700 in land and houses, to judge by what they passed on to their son.
Gauguin-Juranville inherited from his mother, and, on 15 April 1844, his father made him a donation from his own assets and from the half of the assets owing to him in his joint estate with his late wife; this amounted to FF 8,964 in real estate and loans, the proportions of which are not specified. In his donation, Guillaume Gauguin-Bonnet also bestowed FF 16,000 on his grandsons, to be received after his death (A.D., Loiret, Gauguin-Juranville donation-distribution, 1853; inventory of Guillaume Gauguin-Juranville, deceased, 1855). This generation therefore handed on capital amounting to FF 49,000, of which FF 16,000 was in monetary form.
The Gauguin-Juranvilles not only kept intact the real estate accumulated by their ancestors (FF 33,000) but placed their own money – including the moneys, sum unknown, received via parental donation in 1844 – for the most part in financial and stock market investments, with the exception of the FF 3,570 purchase of the quai Neuf Tudelle house. Guillaume's share in these assets came to more than FF 38,000, and that of Élisabeth to around FF 26,000 seemingly in her own right (redeemed as cash during her succession in 1845) and FF 6,000 as her half of the joint estate (A.N., Gauguin-Chazal marriage contract, 1846; A.D., Loiret, acquittance of loan by Gauguin father and son, 1847).
The couple had therefore received and accumulated personal estate of around FF 66,400, that is, double the real estate inherited from the Gauguin line. We thus see this generation gradually moving away from the land, preferring loans and long-term investments, such as the FF 5,000 of shares in railway companies, a sector then rapidly expanding. They therefore possessed a capital of FF 103,000 to pass on to their descendants.
Investment in loans, which were then, before banks acquired this function, made by individuals, was not always a sinecure. Guillaume the grocer had bad debts to deal with, and had recourse to court and bailiffs, and, when his debtors' house burnt down, contrived to obtain his interest and pay his legal costs thanks to the indemnity paid by the Compagnie d'assurance mutuelle contre l'incendie du Loiret (A.D., acquittance by Messieurs Rat and Gauguin to the insurance company, 1838).
On documentary evidence, the annual revenue of the artist's grandfather, Gauguin-Juranville, at the end of his life, can be estimated at FF 2,500 p.a. This included dividends on his own shares and usufruct of assets donated to his descendants: interest on loans, farm rent roll and land and house rentals (A.D., Loiret, Gauguin-Juranville donation-distribution, 1853).
The Gauguin-Juranvilles had two children. On 17 April 1814, Guillaume Clovis Pierre (mairie d'Orléans, birth register, 1814, no. 478) was born in Orleans, becoming a journalist and father of the painter. His birth was followed, on 5 April 1819, by that of Isidore Fleury (mairie d'Orléans, birth register, 1819, no. 455). Isidore was already working as a jeweller – his first profession – at 2 Rue Saint-Maclou by 1845 (mairie d'Orléans, register of deaths, 1845, no. 632). The life of both sons was profoundly influenced by their fervent republican convictions.

Maternal Line

Anne Pierre – or Marie Pierre or Thérèse – Laisnay, perhaps born 5 February 1772 (Marks-Vandenbroucke, thesis, 1956, p. 45, note 2), of unknown origins, took refuge in Bilbao during the French Revolution. There she met a Spanish dragoon Colonel, Don Mariano de Tristán y Moscoso (1760-1807). Don Mariano's



Don Mariano de Tristán Moscoso, Gauguin's great-grandfather.
Photo: David Sweetman.

brother, Don Pío, also a Colonel to the King of Spain, spent fifteen years in Peru fighting against the independence demanded by the republicans, and was for a time acting Viceroy. After their victory, the republicans sought to retain this very talented man in Peru by appointing him to the highest offices of government, and he very nearly became President. (Flora Tristan, republished 1979).



Don Pío de Tristán Moscoso, brother of Don Mariano.
Museo municipal de Arequipa.
Photo: David Sweetman.

According to Loize (1966, p. 136), the Moscoso family traced its descent from the Aztec Emperor Montezuma, and Pola Gauguin himself (1938, pp. 3-4) notes that the features and character of his father testified to the probability of Amerindian blood on the maternal side. Pola suggests that this was notably discernible in a daguerreotype of Don Mariano's sister belonging to the family. Flora insists that the family was of 'pure European blood', though Don Pío 'did not have European features'. Miscegenation would inevitably have been deprecated in the Moscoso milieu, and would have been kept secret. Did it occur? A family tree worked out by a Scandinavian reveals that the earliest Tristáns traceable were, around 1650, landowners descended from the aristocracy of Béarn (which was by then part of France, having previously been independent), then merchants in Spain, and that the first Tristán to settle in Peru died in 1772 as Royal Commissary of Arequipa. His son, Joseph Joaquin de Tristán y Caraza, *alcalde mayor* of Arequipa, was the father of the two Colonels.
The Moscoso side can be traced back in Spain to the second half of the fifteenth century, to Juan de Borja (the name was changed to Borgia in Italy), duque de Gandía, whose son married the daughter of Alfonso de Aragón, the archbishop of Zaragoza. Their son, Francisco de Borja, later became *General de los jesuitas*, having previously been adviser to the King of Spain; he was the grandfather of the woman who married Lope Osorio de Moscoso, 6th Count of Altamira, who descended on the maternal side from the Portuguese nobility of the fifteenth century. The first Moscoso attested in Peru was the deputy mayor of Arequipa, born in 1663 to an aristocratic mother whose family were land and mine-owners from Potosí. His granddaughter, María Mercedes Moscoso y Pérez, was the mother of the two Colonels.

In 1802, Servais-Toussaint Roncelin, a non-juring priest, married Mlle Laisnay and Don Mariano at the latter's house (P. Daix, *Paul Gauguin, biographie*, Paris, 1989, p. 17). The marriage was never regularised, perhaps because the French consulate at Bilbao was closed at this date (according to Michaud in Daix, 1989, p. 17). The young couple moved to Paris, and there, on 7 April 1803, a daughter was born, Flore Célestine Thérèse Henriette, known as Flora. On 10 May 1806, Don Mariano bought a vast house with a garden at Vaugirard, Grande-Rue no. 102, where his friend, the young Simón Bolívar, came to stay (Marks-Vandenbroucke, thesis, 1956, p. 38). Don Mariano died suddenly on 14 June 1807; the Prince of Masserano, then Spanish Consul General in Paris, authorised Mlle Laisnay to manage the dead man's assets till the heirs were legally acknowledged (Marks-Vandenbroucke, thesis, 1956, p. 357). A year after the birth of Don Mariano's posthumous son, who lived only two years, Napoleon's war in Spain (set off by the Dos de Mayo insurgency) triggered the decree of 24 September 1808 sequestrating Spanish assets in France (Marks-Vandenbroucke, thesis, 1956, p. 39). On 9 November 1808, Marie Laisnay requested exemption, 'saying she was the *de facto* wife of the late Don Mariano', but was refused, and in 1817 the inheritance reverted to the State (Marks-Vandenbroucke, thesis, 1956, p. 40). Marie was then living with her daughter in Rue du Fouarre, Paris, in a poor and ill-reputed quarter.

The very beautiful Flora soon began work as a colourist at the



Flora Tristan, engraving (from Morice, 1919).

studio founded in 1820 by André François Chazal, a painter and quality engraver who came of a family of artists and craftsmen. Born in Paris on 13 July 1797 to Léonard Chazal and Geneviève Buterne, he was brown-haired and 1.68 metres in height. He had chestnut eyes and a fair complexion, with oval face, long nose and high forehead. (A.D., Eure, register of deaths, 1860, no. 140; Gaillon committal register, 1839, no. 7326). His work, long confused with that of his elder brother Antoine Camille Chazal (1793-1854), Professor of Iconography at the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, was identified by Ursula Marks-Vandenbroucke (thesis, 1956, annex II, pp. 350-353) under the signature 'Chazal Jeune'. Flora and André were married on 3 February 1821, and had a first son, who died in 1832, then Ernest Camille, born 22 June 1824, and lastly Aline Marie, born 16 October 1825, at a time when Chazal was fleeing his creditors. He met his daughter for the first time ten years later; Flora meanwhile obtained a court order on 3 May 1828, allowing her to administer her own property separately (A.N., liquidation of the estate of Flora Tristan, 1846). Around 1829, Chazal went to live in the suburbs, at Montmartre, and became a surveyor (A.D., Eure, Gaillon committal register, 1839, no. 7326; André Chazal manuscripts, 1849-1856).



Head of Medusa, engraving by André Chazal. Photo: BNF.

In 1829, Flora, having met Chabrié, a ship's captain who had known Don Pío in Peru, decided to make herself known to her aged uncle (letter of 2 June 1830), hoping in this way to acquire fortune and the family name. Don Mariano was moved, but pleaded the letter of the law in acknowledging her only as an illegitimate child, thus avoiding the requirement to pay her one fifth of her father's inheritance. She was however to benefit from a future legacy of 3,000 *piastras fuertes* in cash (some FF 15,000) from her grandmother, bestowed for love of her dead son, and an annual allowance of FF 2,500, bestowed purely out of goodwill by Don Pío himself, who believed this would ensure his niece an adequate income (reply of 6 October 1830). She embarked on the brig *Mexicain* on 7 April 1833, and, after a long and wearing voyage, arrived in Peru on 8 September. The stay with her family, though eventful, produced no advance on previous offers, and she returned to France, leaving Lima on 15 July 1834. On her return, she wrote her memoirs, *Les Pérégrinations d'une paria*, which appeared in 1838.

A series of very serious conflicts, beginning in 1835 (in particular, the fact that Aline, three times abducted by her father, accused him of incest) allowed Flora to obtain a court order on 14 March 1838 freeing her from cohabitation (A.N., liquidation of the estate of Flora Tristan, 1846). Enraged, Chazal attempted to kill his wife on 10 September 1838. After a widely publicised trial, he was sentenced to twenty years on 1 February 1839, and committed to Gaillon prison in the Eure on 13 August. A new life opened up for Flora. She obtained a place for Aline well away from Paris, apparently in a fashion store (George Sand's letter of January 1845, in Marks-Vandebroucke, thesis, 1956, p. 50), as she wished her daughter to have a profession (cf. Flora Tristan, 1973, p. 31, note 16). Thereafter, Flora devoted herself entirely to the cause of the workers and the emancipation of women, in particular demanding the restoration of divorce, which had been abolished in 1816. Her friend, the phalansterian Jules Laure (cf. Flora Tristan, 1973, p. 30, note 8) having introduced her into the literary and artistic milieux of Paris, the mettlesome Flora attracted literary and craft circles to her own salon in the Rue du Bac. Noting the appalling poverty of the working class in England (which she mentions in her *Promenades dans Londres*, 1840), she decided to undertake her 'Tour of France' in April 1844. She brought all her energy to bear on haranguing the workers, inciting them to defend themselves by organising a General Trades Union. In June 1844, a third edition of her *Union ouvrière* appeared in Lyon by collective subscription, for the most part subscribed by the working class. The fouriériste Victor Considérant, who deemed her 'one of the women most gifted for social causes', categorised her as 'among the pacific [non-revolutionary] socialists' (Daix, 1989, p. 20; Flora Tristan, 1973, p. 24). She in her turn – presumably around the 1830s – attested her benevolence toward Considérant's brand of Utopian socialism by acquiring two individual shares in the Europe-wide subscription for the foundation of the first Phalanstery (A.N., liquidation of the estate of Flora Tristan, 1846).

In the latter part of her life, Flora frequented the bizarre Abbé Constant, who, under the pseudonym Éliphas Levi, revived occultism in France. Constant later said of her, 'She's an adorable vampire […]; there is a child's naivety and the conscience of a saint in her moral homicides' (Chassé, 1955, p. 30). In 1846,



Flora Tristan's tomb in the chartreuse cemetery in Bordeaux.
Photo: Philippe Prévot.

after her death, he published *L'Emancipation de la femme ou le Testament de la Paria*. Flora died on 14 November 1844, exhausted, at Bordeaux during the course of her tour of France. A subscription allowed the grateful workers to erect a monument, which was inaugurated on 22 October 1848 before crowds of between seven and eight thousand. Gauguin later recalled: 'My grandmother was a strange woman […] Proudhon said that she was a woman of genius […] A socialist, anarchist blue-stocking […] What I can say for certain is that Flora Tristan was a very pretty and noble lady' (*Avant et après*, p. 84).

7 December 1844
'Owing to the legal interdiction of André Chazal' [conviction of certain crimes in France entails forfeiture of civil rights], the painter Jean François Jules Hyacinthe Laure is appointed deputy tutor of Mlle Aline Chazal, and probably also of her brother Ernest Camille (still a minor), while Auguste Bapaume, a draughtsman domiciled at 9bis Rue Geoffroy-Marie, becomes their guardian (A.N., liquidation of the estate of Flora Tristan, 1846).

12 December and following
At the request of Auguste Bapaume, *maître* Labarbe establishes the inventory of Flora Tristan, deceased, at her home at 59 Rue du Bac, in the presence of Jules Laure, but also of Antoine Chazal, painter, domiciled at 20 Rue de l'Ouest, Paris, and Charles Étienne Laisnay (son of Aline and Ernest's maternal great uncle), student of mathematics, domiciled at 11 Rue de Condé, Paris. The latter are present as guardian and deputy guardian of André Chazal, again 'owing to his legal interdiction'. On 17 December, the court names *maître* Labarbe acting administrator of the assets resulting from the inheritance of Mme Tristan Moscoso. The inventory indicates that, at least during her last few years, Flora owned no property and lived on the income from her personal investments, whose value might perhaps be estimated at FF 1,500 per annum (A.N., liquidation of the estate of Flora Tristan, 1846).

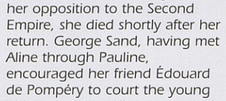
On the death of her mother, Aline, who had become a 'seamstress' as early as 1843 (according to J. Puech) and was then living in Amsterdam (A.N., liquidation of the estate of Flora Tristan, 1846), returned to Paris. There she was taken in hand by Mme Roland, a friend of Flora's, and placed (**around 20 December**) with the Bascans at 70 Rue de Chaillot. 'This is the boarding school my daughter went to', wrote George Sand (in her letter of January 1845, cited in Marks-Vandenbroucke, thesis, 1956,

p. 50), 'an excellent school run by a most respectable and intelligent couple'. It was, Gauguin noted, 'an essentially republican establishment' (*Avant et après*, p. 85). This was undeniably true: Pauline Roland (1805-1852) too was one of the great figures of feminine socialism, who campaigned in favour of popular education and the equality of women. Deported to Algeria for her opposition to the Second Empire, she died shortly after her return. George Sand, having met Aline through Pauline, encouraged her friend Édouard de Pompéry to court the young girl, saying that Aline seemed 'as tender and kind as her mother was imperious and choleric […] This child has the air of an angel […] her mother never much appealed to me, despite her courage and determination. There was too much vanity in her' (letter of January 1845, cited in Marks-Vandenbroucke, thesis, 1956, p. 50).

29 December
A public auction of Flora's furniture (A.N., liquidation of the estate of Flora Tristan, 1846) took place against Aline's wishes; she was clearly traumatised by this event, since, twenty years later, when she knew she could not long survive, she 'begged her children not to allow the shame of a sale of their mother's personal effects'. Like her brother, she bought part of these effects; she paid a price well above their value, and apparently kept them till the end of her life (A.N., Gauguin-Chazal marriage contract, 1846; A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, 1st inventory of Aline Gauguin, deceased, 1867; testament of 1865).

1845

8 April
Having convened a family council, Auguste Bapaume placed at the disposition of Ernest Chazal, still minor, the sum of FF 2,500, since 'Monsieur Chazal [had], some time before



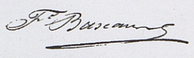
Ernest Chazal's signature, 1846.

he came of age, undertaken an operation relative to his profession as a draughtsman'. To this must be added the large sums that Ernest, between the death of his mother and his own majority, never ceased to demand from his guardian (A.N., liquidation of the estate of Flora Tristan, 1846).

18 July
Ernest Camille Chazal, having served a writ on Auguste Bapaume, tutor dative to Aline Chazal, minor, referred to the court his demand that the joint possession (*indivision*) be resolved. Bapaume 'declared that he would defer to the wisdom of the court in respect of this request'. Judgement having been given in favour of the plaintiff, the legacy of Flore Tristan Moscoso was calculated, liquidated and distributed (A.N., engrossment of the judgement rendered by the Seine county court).

8 August
At the request of Ernest Camille Chazal, made on 5 August, the *juge commissaire* summoned Monsieur Bapaume, represented by his advocate, to be present at the opening of the official report on the liquidation of the estate of the late Mme Chazal and at the referral of the parties to *maître* Labarbe, the notary appointed for this purpose (A.N., extract from the minutes of the clerk of the county court of the Seine, judge's ruling).

11 November
Auguste Bapaume, no doubt weary of these conflicts, resigned his guardianship around September-October. Following deliberation by a family council of relatives and friends, Ferdinand Bascans is appointed tutor to Aline Chazal (A.N., liquidation of the estate of Flora Tristan, 1846).



Ferdinand Bascans' signature, 1846.

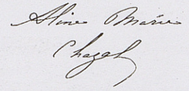
1846

24 January
The liquidation-distribution of the estate of Flora Tristan, which essentially comprised a large sum in moneys owing, a savings book and a 3% state annuity (acquired by *maître* Labarbe after sale of shares and bonds), assigned to each child the sum of FF 23,672.27 (A.N.)

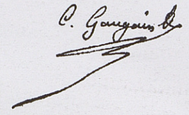
30 April
Ernest Camille Chazal appeared before *maître* Labarbe to hand over judicial and official documents relating to the verdict officially approving the liquidation of the estate of Flora Tristan and the signification of this verdict to the guardian and deputy guardian (A.N.).

THE MEETING OF GAUGUIN'S PARENTS

Gauguin tells us that Aline Chazal met her future husband Clovis Gauguin at her boarding school (*Avant et après*, p. 85). Clovis was



Aline Chazal's signature, 1855.



Clovis Gauguin's signature, 1847.

no doubt friendly with Bascans, who was, like him, a republican and a man of letters. (C.A.D.N., notarized deeds-by post, Lima, full power of attorney of Marie Aline Chazal, widow Gauguin, 1850). Clovis was then 'political columnist' on the republican daily *Le National* (*Avant et après*, p. 85). He is again mentioned as a staff-writer in 1848 (cf. Gauguin's birth certificate), but, since the articles of this paper were rarely signed, we do not know which articles he wrote. However, his name appears along with those of his colleagues in the 26 May 1845 number as subscribers to the monument to Godefroy Cavaignac.

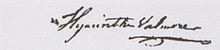
30 May 1846
The town house of the justice of the peace of the 10th arrondissement of Paris was the scene of a 'family council' convened by F. Bascans, guardian to Aline; it was 'called to decide whether it considered appropriate the marriage and the articles governing it, previously agreed between the two families'. The council consisted of 'six relatives or allies of the minor, half from the paternal, half from the maternal side, known to have had friendly relations with the father and mother of the minor'. These are: Antoine Chazal, Aline's uncle; Ernest Camille Chazal, draughtsman, 9 bis Rue Geoffroy-Marie (the address of his former guardian, which he maintained for official purposes, though moving out fairly often), Jules Laure, friend (in fact, primarily Flora's friend…), and, on the maternal side, her great uncle Thomas Joseph Laisnay, retired officer, 11 Rue de Condé, Paris, her cousin, Charles Étienne Jean Laisnay, 11 Rue de l'Odéon, and Benjamin Labarbe, friend (A.N., extract from the minute book of the record office of the Justice of the Peace of the 10th arrondissement of Paris).

11 June 1846
In accordance with the decision of the family council, *maître* Labarbe drew up at the house of Monsieur Bascans the marriage contract of Monsieur Gauguin and Mlle Chazal, who chose both 'settlement in trust [the dowry of the future wife comprises her personal and real assets present and to come, to be administered by the husband, who has, however, no right to dispose of them] and communal estate of any profits and savings that they are able to make during their marriage in personal assets and real estate; all profits from this communal estate shall belong wholly and in full to the surviving spouse, and, should there be a living child, the donation to the surviving spouse of the assets comprising the legacy of the first decease shall be reduced to usufruct of half of these assets'. At 32 years of age, Clovis, who had received the donation of his grandparents and the legacy of his mother, possessed FF 29,350, of which FF 20,668 were immediately available; of the latter, FF 6,200 were of his own earning. He vested in the communal estate 15 shares in the Compagnie du chemin de fer du Nord worth FF 11,000. Aline's FF 25,000 included what she had inherited from her mother but also some savings and wedding presents to the value of FF 1,400. The young marrieds thus possessed a total of FF 54,900 (A.N.).

1847

25 April
Birth of Fernande Marceline Marie Gauguin, the first child of Clovis and Aline, at 52 Rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, which had been Marrast's address the year before (A.P., reconstituted registry office archives, Births series, 9th arrondissement, 1847).

8 July
Marie Gauguin is baptised at the church of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette. Her godfather is Ferdinand Bascans and her godmother is Hyacinthe



Hyacinthe Valmore's signature, 1846.

Valmore, a friend of Aline's at the boarding school, who had been her second witness at the signature of the marriage contract. Hyacinthe, daughter to the poet Marceline Desbordes-Valmore (1786-1859), who had been a close friend of Flora Tristan (*Avant et après*, p. 84), enjoyed a brilliant career as a teacher. She married Jacques Langlais, a lawyer and versatile politician close to the ideas of the *National* till the rise of Louis-Napoléon.
Hyacinthe lost a child at a very early age and herself died at thirty. She was known as 'Ondine'.
(A.N., Gauguin-Chazal marriage contract; paroisse [parish church] de Notre-Dame de Lorette, register of baptisms, 1847, no. 408; *Dictionnaire biographique des auteurs de tous les temps et de tous les pays*, Paris, 1957).



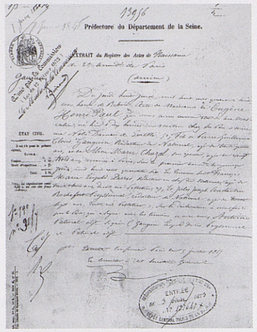
Marceline Debordes-Valmore.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

1848

7 June
Eugène Henri Paul Gauguin is born at his parent's house, 52 Rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette (it shortly afterwards became 56), in a block of flats adjacent to Delacroix's studio at 54 (A.P., cadastre memorandum books, 1841-1858).
The birth was declared in the presence of François Marie Léopold Duras, editor of the *National* and Jules Joseph Constantin Rochefort Peyssonnel, staff-writer on the same paper (A.P., reconstituted registry office archives, Births series, 9th arrondissement, 1848, f° 790, no. 3117.)
Duras (c. 1813-1863) took over the editorship of the *National* when Marrast was drafted into the government after the fall of the July monarchy, and continued to advocate moderate republican ideals.



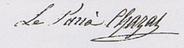
The house where Gauguin was born, now 56 rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, Paris, next to the lower building that housed Delacroix's studio.



Paul Gauguin's birth certificate.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

1849

15 May
While working as an accountant in the straw workshop of the Gaillon county jail, André Chazal addresses his *Mémoire d'un Paria* to the 'Citizen President of the French Republic'. This long and grandiloquent text includes a psycho-social study of the prison population, recommends reforms of socialist kind, and presents a plea for mercy for persons such as himself, who, having been victims of slander, have retained their moral discretion. He further writes to the députés Favre and Considérant in the hope that they will defend his cause (A.D., Eure, A. Chazal manuscripts).



André Chazal's signature, 1849.

19 July
The baptism of Paul Gauguin is celebrated at the parish church of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette. Clovis is absent and recorded as unemployed (he must therefore have already left the *National*, which was to be closed by the government in 1852). Paul's godfather is his grandfather Guillaume Gauguin, domiciled at Orleans, his godmother Honorine Girard, domiciled at Neuilly (Notre-Dame-de-Lorette parish church, register of baptisms, 1849, no. 467).



Gauguin Aged Around One, painting by Jules Laure. Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental Maurice Denis 'Le Prieuré'.

8 August
(Merlhès, 1984, p. 321, note 4)
No doubt shaken by recent political events – which may also have contributed to his leaving the *National* – Clovis Gauguin takes ship for Peru with his wife and two children on a 'trading ship, the *Albert*, a Dieppe three-master commissioned at Le Havre, whence it left directly for Lima', the town where Aline's rich and powerful family was living. 'Whether, after the events of 1848, my father foresaw […] the *coup d'état* of 1852, I don't know; at all events, he was taken with the notion of leaving for Lima where he intended to found a newspaper. The young household was not unprovided for' (*Avant et après*, p. 85).
Later Aline declared that 'the two of them possessed only the objects set down below, the inventory of which was drawn up *in situ* by the Consulate General of France on 17 December 1849; he notes the exis-

1848

February
Louis-Philippe, 'King of the French People' since 1830, is overwhelmed by the economic and moral crisis; he does not attempt to resist when, on 23 February, the barricades go up in Paris, but flees to England after abdicating in favour of his grandson, the comte de Paris.

25 February
The 2nd Republic is proclaimed by a provisional government comprising seven main members (including Lamartine, Arago, and Ledru-Rollin). Some of these are nominated by the republican daily, *Le National*, on which Clovis Gauguin is a staff-writer. His friend, the editor, Armand Marrast, is called to take up a government position.



Armand Marrast, caricature, detail. Photo: BNF.

April
An Assemblée constituante is elected on 23 April and socialist policies inspired by Louis Blanc are instituted (creating 'Ateliers nationaux' to meet the demands of unemployed workers).

4 June
Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte is elected by four départements, while most of the candidates presented by *Le National* are rejected. *Le National*, 10 June: 'We have been completely defeated, as we willingly confess'.
Government policy fails. Civil war, in the form of the 'Journées de Juin' (23-26 June), leads the Republic to choose reactionary policies.



The Faubourg Saint-Antoine Barricade during the Journées de Juin, watercolour by Gaspard Gobaut. Paris, Musée Carnavalet.

10 December
Having taken an oath of loyalty to the Constitution in November, Prince Louis-Napoléon, nephew of Napoleon I, is elected President of the Republic for a ten-year term.

tence of seven crates, valued at FF 17,457.10, the sum total of the invoices for flowers, silk items, millinery, shawl-hangers, perfumes, cosmetics and candles, sealed in the said crates, with FF 500 in gold'. This cargo suggests that Clovis and Aline intended to set up a business in French luxury goods in Peru. Was this the whole of their joint estate? Of the capital that they possessed three years before, we know that the investments constituting the majority of Aline's dowry had remained intact (cf. *Chronology*, 1852 and 1857). Clovis, perhaps under the impulse of the FF 750 that had come his way in November – his share as his mother's heir of a loan repayment to his parents' joint estate (not cited in the succession of Élisabeth Juranville) – had 'contracted a life insurance policy with the company La Nationale, dated 9 December 1847, on his own account or, failing which, on that of his wife, settled on Marie, their daughter, and had committed himself to paying the sum of FF 3,617.20 in eighteen annual instalments'. But the total worth of Clovis at his death remains unknown because the 1865 inventory was never finalised, owing to 'lack of information' (A.D., acquittance of loan by Gauguin father and son, 1847; C.A.D.N., Lima, Chancellery bureau no. 14, letter of 13 January 1850 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; A.D., Loiret, Gauguin-Chazal inventory, 1865; cf. *Chronology*, 1865).

30 October

'He was unlucky in having an appalling captain, which caused him terrible pain, since he was in the latter stages of heart disease. So that when he wanted to land at Port-Famine (Punta Arenas) in the Magellan Straits [in Chili, where he was buried], he collapsed in the whaleboat. He had been struck down by the rupture of an aneurism' (*Avant et après*, p. 85). The ship's muster roll records: 'Being at Port-Famine, calling in to take on water, we, Jean Marie Sain, deep-sea captain, commandant of the three-master *Albert*, tonnage 252, in fulfilment on board of the functions of registry officer, in the presence of Monsieur Avoine Victor, second-in-command, and Monsieur Gallissien Jean Vincent, ship's lieutenant, summoned as witnesses, declare that Monsieur Gauguin Clovis, married to Mlle Aline Chazal, aged twenty-four years […], domiciled, before embarking, at Rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, 56, in Paris, registered in the muster roll as passenger travelling to Lima (Callao), died on board ship, at two in the afternoon. In testimony of which we have drawn up the present death certificate' (A.D., Loiret, death certificate of Clovis Gauguin, annexed to a power of attorney given by Mme Gauguin-Chazal, 1853).

The young widow and her two children were welcomed in Lima by her grand uncle, then aged around eighty: 'The aged […] Don Pio fell quite in love with this very pretty niece of his, who so resembled his beloved brother Don Mariano'; she was treated like 'a veritable spoilt child' (*Avant et après*, p. 85) and stayed there five years, so that 'Little Paul' spoke Spanish before he spoke French.



Lima in the late 19th century. Photo: collection Viollet.

1850

3 August

In Lima, before the Consul General of France in Peru, Aline Gauguin establishes a power of attorney in favour of F. Bascans 'in whom she vests the power to represent her in all respects and places, authorising him to safeguard her rights and those of her children, to defend and serve her interests and those of her children, receive inheritances […] accept all donations' (C.A.D.N.)

7 September

At Vesterhavn, in the Danish island of Laesö in the Kattegat, Mette Sofie Gad is born to a bourgeois family.





Mette Gad's parents (from Malingue, 1959).

She is the eldest daughter of Henry Theodor Gad (1816-1860), then *birkedommer* or judge at Laesö, part Norwegian through an eighteenth-century ancestor (Hvidt, 1987, p. 162), and Johanne Emilie Sofie née Lund (1822-1900), the divorced wife of the customs officer Peter Christensen Borthig (*Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, Copenhagen, 1979, p. 449). Emilie's parents were the miniaturist Lund and Pauline née Paulsen. Pauline was the daughter of a country blacksmith, and twice married; her second husband was Lieutenant-Colonel Paulsen (Pola Gauguin, 1938, p. 23). Mette was followed by Ingeborg, born 7 February 1852, also at Laesö, Pauline, known as Pylle, born 21 February 1854, Theodor, born 1858, and Aage, born 1859. Their father had received the post of *byfogd*, civil magistrate, at Thisted, before becoming *kancelliråd* or ministerial officer of justice (*Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, 1979, p. 449). Widowed in 1860, Emilie went to live in Copenhagen with her mother, who had also been widowed, in a large



Mette, in the centre, among her siblings. Photo: former Malingue archives.

apartment in a comfortable house in Nyhavngade in the towncentre (Pola Gauguin, 1938, pp. 22-24).

At seventeen, Mette, a woman of strong liberal opinions, became governess to the children of the Minister Jacques Estrup, head of the Conservative party of Denmark. He liked her forthright character and freedom of thought, and gave her the opportunity to improve her education, in particular her knowledge of foreign languages (Pola Gauguin, 1938, pp. 27-28; cf. *22*).



J.B. Estrup. Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

1851

8 December

Birth of Claude Émile Schuffenecker (1851-1934) at Fresne-Saint-Mamès (Haute-Saône), the son of Nicolas Schuffenecker, tailor, and Anne Monnet, seamstress and later laundrywoman (mairie de Meudon, photocopy of the registration of the marriage of Schuffenecker's parents, 6 August 1850, and of the birth certificate of their first son; A.P., marriage register of the 5th arrondissement, 1880, no. 699).

1852

7 June

In Lima, before the Chancellor of the French Legation and of the Consulate General in Lima, Aline Gauguin declares, in her own name and as legal guardian of her children, that she is vesting power of attorney – for the management of her monetary affairs – in Messieurs Thomas Lachambre et Cie (C.A.D.N.). The latter appear in the Didot-Bottin *Annuaire-Almanach du commerce* as trade-commissioners at 9 Rue de la Monnaie in 1851, then as export-merchants in 1852, before becoming bankers and merchants in 1867.

Was this power of attorney required by Aline's intention to carry on trade between France and Peru, as the goods carried on the *Albert* would suggest? Or did she simply wish, given her husband's death, to regularise papers allowing her to manage from Peru moneys left in France?

14 April

Birth of Jacob Meijer De Haan (1852-1895) in Amsterdam to a Jewish family that owned a biscuit factory.

Later, he proved to be interested in religion, art and music; he and his brothers gave a concert before the Dutch royal family at The Hague (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 347).

1853

30 March

Birth of Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890) in Groot-Zundert in the Netherlands to a family involved in religion and art-dealing (Bernard, April 1893, p. 327).

9 May

In Lima, Aline gives a power of attorney to an advocate to the Orleans county court, allowing him to be her proxy in the matter below (A.D., deposit of power of attorney with *maître* Ponceau, 31 August 1853).

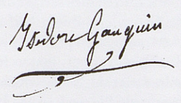
19 September

Having been the sole heir of his mother, Monique Bonnet, who died around 1826, Guillaume Gauguin had in 1844 received a donation made by his father (cf. *Chronology*, Paternal line).

It was now Guillaume's turn to grant a donation in the form of a division prior to decease in favour of his son Isidore and his grandchildren Marie and Paul, while retaining usufruct of his assets for the remainder of his days.

The estate having been divided into two parts, lots were drawn, and the two minors were assigned the lot comprising four houses and eight little garden or vineyard-holdings, along with various moneys owing, this latter including a very large sum to be shared with Isidore, the whole amounting to FF 32,707.875.

Uncle 'Zizi', already a 'landowner', received three houses, eighteen little holdings mainly put to vine, along with moneys owing, the whole amounting to exactly the same value (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, Gauguin-Juranville donation-distribution; A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, supplementary inventory of Aline Gauguin, deceased, 1868).



Isidore Gauguin's signature, 1853.

That very day, Gauguin-Juranville, no doubt ailing, established a power of attorney in favour of his son, 'to whom he gives the power to manage all his assets and affairs' (A.D., Loiret).

1854

1st semester

For FF 167,68, the municipality of Orleans sells to Paul and Marie Gauguin, domiciled in Peru, represented by their Uncle Isidore, a little alley 'bordering on quai Neuf to the north, Rue Tudelle to the south, Mlle Ratouis to the west, and the house at 31, quai Tudelle to the east, which

1849

José Rufino Echenique, son-in-law of don Pio (Flora Tristan's uncle), becomes Vice-President of the Republic of Peru (Perruchot, 1961, p. 29).



General Echenique, engraving. Photo: BNF.

13 May

In France, the 'Party of Order' triumphs in the elections for the Assemblée législative.

13 June

A demonstration against the French expedition to Rome (to restore the city and States to the Pope) is repressed, a state of siege declared in Paris, and Ledru-Rollin exiled; the government now acts overtly against republicans.

1851

March

Echenique becomes President of the Republic of Peru, remaining in power till 1854 (Perruchot, 1961, p. 29).

2 December

Louis-Napoléon's *coup d'état*, ratified by referendum on 21-22 December.

1852

21 November

The Empire is re-established by a senatus-consultum, and ratified by a second referendum.

1853

30 January

Napoléon III marries the young Eugénie de Montijo.



Empress Eugénie, painting by Franz Xaver Winterhalter, Arenenberg (Switzerland), Musée Napoléon. Photo: Giraudon.

1 July

Haussmann becomes Prefect of the département de la Seine.

1854

In Lima, General Ramón Castilla returns to power; he had been President from 1845 to 1851, and now remained in power till 1862.

27 March

The beginning of the Crimean War, in which Russia faces Turkey, France, England and Piedmont.

20 September

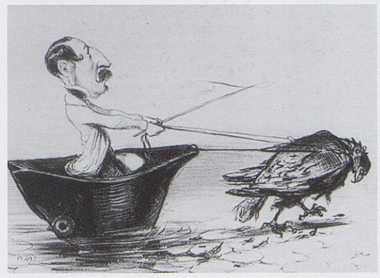
Battle of River Alma (Crimea).

First commercial treaties between Japan and western countries; Japanese art reaches France.

Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française* begins to appear.



Viollet-le-Duc, daguerréotype, 1845. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Louis-Napoléon's coup d'état, caricature by Honoré Daumier, 1851. Photo: BNF.

latter already belongs to them' (A.D., Loiret, sale, 26-27 January 1854).
A little later, a reciprocal sale of joint use property takes place between Isidore, in the name of Paul and Marie, and Mlle Ratouis, the neighbour, who had recently put up a building abutting the Gauguin house and overhanging the alley (A.D., Loiret, sale, 5-6 June 1854).

2nd semester
Aline and her children return to France, encouraged to do so by the civil war raging in Peru (Perruchot, 1961, p. 29). 'Four years went by when one fine day urgent letters from France arrived. We had to go back to deal with the succession of my paternal grandfather. My mother, who was so impractical in matters of finance, returned to France, to Orleans' (*Avant et après*, p. 87-88). Aline's passport was issued in Lima as early as 9 August 1854 (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, 2nd post-mortem inventory of Aline Gauguin, 30 August 1867), suggesting that their return may have been further motivated by Guillaume's desire to see his grandchildren again before his death.
They arrived **in late 1854 or early 1855**, and settled in 'grandfather's house' (*Avant et après*, p. 193) in Orleans, at 25 quai Tudelle or the adjacent 10 Rue Tudelle, which Guillaume had inherited from his own father (cadastre, section L, ref. 2408; cf. *156*). Both houses comprised two rooms with fireplaces on ground and first floors alike, and an attic; there was a kitchen in an adjoining building; below these, there was a barn surmounted by a terrace and little building in the courtyard-garden, where there was a well. It is possible that the major works (cited in the Gauguin-Juranville liquidation), involving everything from the basic frame of the building to the paintwork, were modifications of the Rue Tudelle house, which was perhaps more particularly set aside for the use of Aline and the children (A.D., Loiret).
Uncle Zizi also lived there. A bachelor of thirty-six, he was then 'under surveillance'; he had taken part in the occupation of the mairie d'Orléans the day after the *coup d'état* of 2 December 1851, and was sentenced to be deported to Algeria; however, the presidential pardon of 15 August 1852, the then national holiday, allowed him to return home after a year in prison (Marks-Vandenbroucke, thesis, 1956, p. 67, note 12).

On 28 February 1852, the jeweller Isidore Gauguin, 'political detainee at the Orleans remand prison', had empowered a third party (probably his father) to administer all his assets and affairs (A.D., Loiret). It seems that, on his liberation, in 1853, Uncle Zizi stopped work in order to become a landlord, and that he then came to live in his father's house (A.D., Loiret, Gauguin-Juranville donation-distribution, 1853).
'At this point, I was just beginning to speak French […]. I was placed as a dayboy in an Orleans boarding-school', Gauguin tells us (*Avant et après*, p. 193).

Birth of Amédée Schuffenecker, brother of the painter Émile, and death of his father. Émile was adopted by an old couple, the Cornus, who were cousins to his mother, while the latter became a governess and laundrywoman in Meudon. The Cornu family were



Madame Cornu (the artist's adoptive mother), drawing by Émile Schuffenecker. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

small-scale chocolate makers and coffee-roasters, living at Rue Jean-Jacques-Rousseau, near the Halles (Grossvogel, 1980-1981, p. 20). Émile attended a religious school, which he left at twelve, having learnt the rudiments of accountancy in order to assist his adoptive parents. He had an artistic patron in Brother François Grellet (1838-1908/1909), a history painter (Merlhès, 1984, p. 401, note 153 and 1995, p. 8).

1855

9 April
Death of Guillaume Gauguin (municipal archives of Orleans, death certificate, 1855, no. 543) at Orleans, 25 quai Tudelle (formerly 31 quai Neuf Tudelle, cf. Orleans cadastre, section L, ref. 2428). His post-mortem inventory records a fair amount of rather rustic furniture, impressive quantities of household linen and masculine and feminine garments. To this should be added certain indications as to his tastes: the complete works of Voltaire, and twelve volumes of *L'Origine de tous les cultes* (1795) by Dupuis (1742-1809). Dupuis, an Enlightenment scholar with a particular interest in astronomy and classical antiquity, was elected to the Convention nationale; in *L'Origine*, he lent his considerable erudition to anti-religious ideas. Too difficult to be popular, it was in abridged form (1796), under the Restoration, that the work caused considerable controversy. The inventory further reveals that the 'vineyard house' at 19 Rue des Montées was not let, but kept for Guillaume's personal use, with all the equipment necessary for producing wine, which he must once have sold at his grocery (A.D., Loiret, 25 April and 4 September 1855).

20 April
A family council designates Isidore Gauguin, the younger son of Guillaume, deputy guardian of his nephew Paul and his niece Marie (A.D., Loiret, inventory of G. Gauguin-Juranville, deceased, 1855).

4 September
The liquidation of the Gauguin-Juranville inheritance settled on each of the Gauguin children half of FF 6,215.84, composed primarily of personal effects and of shares in the Chemin de fer du Nord, which were excellent tradeable stock (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, supplementary inventory of Aline Gauguin, deceased, 1868).

Camille Pissarro, born 10 July 1830 at Saint Thomas (an island in the Danish Lesser Antilles) of a Creole mother and a merchant hailing from Bordeaux, both of them practising Jews, is now twenty-five. He decides to give up his business career and become a painter, and settles in Paris (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, pp. 24-25).

1856

Death of Don Pío de Tristán y Moscoso at Lima: 'He was 113 years old [In fact, 87, if Flora was right in specifying his age as 64 in 1833, cf. Marks-Vandenbroucke, thesis, 1956, p. 53]. In memory of his beloved brother, he had granted an annuity of 5,000 *piastras fuertes*, that is, just over FF 25,000 to my mother. When he was on his deathbed, his family circumvented the old man's wishes and laid hold of this immense fortune, which all went on mad Parisian spending sprees. One cousin, a woman, still very rich, lives on in mummified state in Lima. […] The year after, Etchenique* came to arrange things with my mother. Always the proud one, she replied: "All or nothing". The answer was "Nothing"' (*Avant et après*, p. 88). Thereafter, Aline determined to invest the money from grandfather Gauguin's inheritance for the benefit of her children, and continued to manage her own moneys, with the assistance of the banker Varnier-Roger of Orleans (negotiation of bills, management of stocks and shares in the years 1856-1857) and perhaps also the bank Thomas-Lachambre et Cie of Paris (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, 2nd inventory of Aline Gauguin, deceased, 1867). 'Although we never lived in abject poverty, things thereafter were quite austere' (*Avant et après*, p. 88.)

20 March
Reprieved by the Emperor's decision of 3 March, André Chazal leaves Gaillon prison (Eure) where he had been incarcerated for the last seventeen years (A.D., Eure, Gaillon committal register, no. 7326).

12 December
Henry Moret (1856-1913) born in Cherbourg to a well-off bourgeois family.

1857

1st semester
Aline Chazal, widow Gauguin, residing in Orleans, requests the Parisian 'clerical employees', to whom she has given a power of attorney, to sell the totality of the annuities comprised in her dowry: on 13 February, FF 316 of 4.5% annuity, bought by her husband with money from a bond that Aline had inherited, then, on 17 June, FF 415 of 3% annuity bought on 6 January 1845 by *maître* Labarbe as executor of the estate of Flora Tristan, with the product of the sale of shares and securities owned by Flora. Though the rate of the annuity had steadily increased during this period (implying reduced capital), Aline obtained around FF 16,000 (A.D., Loiret). We do not know what all this money was needed for. Was Aline already intending to settle in Paris?

Birth of Theodore Van Gogh, Vincent's younger brother.

Birth in or around Lyon of Achille Granchi-Taylor (1857-1921) to an Italian father and a French mother.

1859

2 March
Following a judgement handed down by the Orleans county court at the request of Aline Gauguin, legal guardian of her children, the real estate comprising the donation of Guillaume Gauguin is sold at auction for the sum of FF 12,017.52 (that is FF 850.27 more than the 1853 estimate). The double family house comprising 25 portereau Tudelle and 10 Rue Tudelle is excluded from the sale (A.D., Loiret, receipts to various purchasers, 1859; A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, supplementary inventory of Aline Gauguin, deceased, 1868).

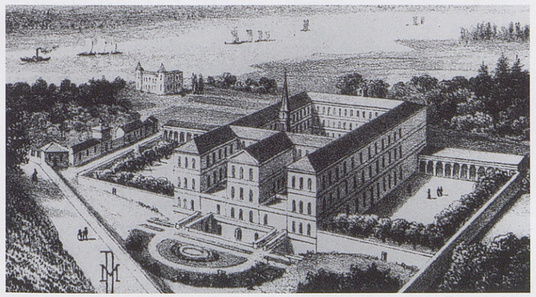
Having moreover received all the moneys owing comprised in the donation to the minors – for example, FF 2,000 reimbursed as early as 20 October 1855, and FF 7,500 discharged 14 June 1859 (A.D., Loiret), Aline, with the permission of the family council, put a part of this money into the repair of the houses before renting them out. 25 portereau Tudelle now became a fairly luxurious residence, with a ground-floor dining room, two first-floor and two attic rooms; 'English-style toilets' and a gallery connecting the house with the kitchen were built. It was rented to a landscape-gardener, whereas 10 Rue Tudelle was let to seamstresses and a carpenter (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, supplementary inventory of Aline Gauguin, deceased, 1868; A.D., Loiret, sale of the two houses, 1870).
During the following months, Aline invested her remaining liquid assets in securities such as 3% government annuities and Crédit foncier de France debentures (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, 2nd post-mortem inventory of Aline Gauguin, 1867; fiscal accounts of her estate, 1867).

Autumn
Paul enters the petit seminaire de La Chapelle-Saint-Mesmin near Orleans, a secondary school founded by Monseigneur Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans and reformer of the teaching



Félix Dupanloup, Bishop of Orléans. Photo: Disdéri.

of Catholicism in France. It was run by the Compagnie de prêtres de Saint-Sulpice. Gauguin later wrote: 'I think it was there that I learned, very young, to hate hypocrisy, assumed virtues and sneaking (semper tres); to distrust everything that went against my instincts, my heart and my conceptions. I also learnt a little of the spirit of Escobar [equivocation],



Petit Séminaire de La Chapelle-Saint-Mesmin, engraving. Collection of the Archives départementales du Loiret.

1855

January
End of the civil war in Peru. Echenique is forced into exile and settles in Paris (Leprohon, 1975, p. 390).

April
The Allies fail to take Sebastopol (Crimea).

September
Malakoff falls, followed by Sebastopol.

May-November
Exposition universelle in Paris. After the Jury's rejection of the works he submitted, Courbet builds his own pavilion to exhibit his paintings, thus placing himself at the head of the realist movement.



Gustave Courbet, photographed by Nadar, c. 1866. Photo: BNF.

1856

18 January
End of the Crimean war: the Russian defeat is consolidated in the terms of the Treaty of Paris.

October
Flaubert publishes *Madame Bovary*.



Gustave Flaubert, photo by Borelli (Rome). Paris, BNF.

1857

April
Baudelaire: *Les Fleurs du Mal*.



Charles Baudelaire, photographed by Nadar, c. 1855. Photo: BNF.

December
Beginning of Anglo-French intervention in China.

1858

24 June
Creation of a Ministry of Algeria.

1859

18 February
Occupation of Saigon by the French.

April-July
Italian War: Napoléon III and Victor-Emmanuel II defeat Austria (at the battles of Magenta and Solferino) which had been occupying Italy since the Congress of Vienna (1815).

25 April
Work begins on the Suez Canal.

Ingres: *Turkish Bath*.
Birth of Joséphin Péladan.
Charles Darwin: *The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection* (French translation, 1862).



Self-Portrait, painting by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 1859. Cambridge (Massachusetts), Harvard University Art Museums, Fogg Art Museum.

which, Lord knows, is no negligible auxiliary in the struggle' (*Avant et après*, p. 194).
A letter from Charles Duclauzel published in the *Nouvelliste d'Orléans* of 26 August 1863 eulogizes the Petit seminaire, which offered courses in literature – including Biblical literature, given by the founder himself – history, philosophy of history, advanced philosophy, aesthetics, sciences and modern languages, along with a preparatory course for those going on to study law (Marks-Vandenbroucke, thesis, 1956, p. 30); Gauguin probably also followed standard courses in Greek, Latin and theology (cf. various Latin quotations in *Avant et après*, and p. 94*)*.
After Aline had left for Paris, Paul was looked after by Jenny Meunier, aged twenty (born 20 August 1839), who was his cousin through her mother Anne Justine Gauguin, and sister of a doctor from Sully. She had always lived at her parents' house, 21 quai Tudelle (formerly 27 quai Neuf Tudelle) and 20 Rue Tudelle, in Orleans (Simon, 1959, p. 6; mairie d'Orléans, birth register, 1839, no. 949; cadastre, section L, ref. 2409, 2425/2426).
Later, writing to Mette from Tahiti c. early August 1892 (Malingue CXXVIII), Gauguin spoke of this period: 'About Pasteur, ask his young son if it was he whom I knew in Orleans. The Zévor and Pasteur boys played with me at St. Mesmin. That was a long time ago'. Gauguin spent three years at this school.

1860

15 April
André Chazal, having become a junk-shop owner, living at 31 Rue de l'Horloge at Évreux, dies in the alms house without leaving his children anything. We do not know whether he had seen his children subsequent to his liberation. His son Ernest Chazal – who, according to Loize (1966, p. 141) had become a sailor – was then in Marseilles, having spent time in 'the almost foreign shores of Africa' [Algeria?], 'when, reduced to despair, he left the country', having been unable to receive 'the support of his father'. Thus André Chazal in his *Mémoire* of 1849 (A.D., Eure, Évreux register of deaths, 1860, no. 140; Gaillon county prison, succession and absence table, 1859-1861; A. Chazal manuscripts).

That year, Aline Gauguin, probably accompanied by her daughter Mary, settled in Paris, 33 Rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin, where she opened a workshop (Perruchot, 1961, p. 37) and worked as dressmaker and clothes seller (*Annuaire-Almanach du Commerce*, Didot-Bottin, 1861-1865).
Her apartment, in the rear building, on the first-floor, courtyard side, included an antechamber, a salon, two rooms with fireplaces, two small rooms, and toilets (A.P., cadastre memorandum books, 1852 and 1862).

30 July
Birth of Émile Jourdan (1860-1931) at Vannes to a well-off family of legal tradition.

1861

This was the year in which Camille Pissarro (1830-1903) made friends with Armand Guillaumin (1841-1927) and Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) at the *académie* Suisse, which was renowned for being at odds with official teachings (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 27).

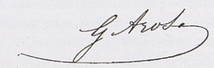


Paul Cézanne c. 1861. Paris, Musée d'Orsay. Photo: Vollard Archives.

26 January
Birth of Louis Anquetin (1861-1932) at Étrépagny in the Eure (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 228).

17 March
Birth of Charles Laval (1861-1894) at 65 Rue Blanche, Paris, in the home of his parents: the brilliant Eugène, who had been Architect in Chief of the département du Gard since 1857 and Marcienne Lewkowicz, of Polish origin. Charles' brother, Eugène ('Nino'), had been born in Italy sixteen months earlier (Merlhès, 1984, pp. 450-451). The boys lost their father in 1869, but far from falling into poverty, they probably both received a solid bourgeois upbringing (Merlhès, 1984, p. 452, note 219).

9 November
A binding I.O.U. made out to Gustave Arosa by Aline Gauguin granting her FF 5,000 until 31 July 1865



Gustave Arosa's signature, 1867.

(a few weeks before she received payment on the life insurance policy taken out in 1847 by her husband) was probably intended to allow her to settle in Paris. It testifies to the already close and trusting relation between Arosa, partner in a stockbroker's, and Aline, dressmaker (A.N., obligation witnessed by *maître* Prestat in Paris; cf. *Chronology*, 1872). The Arosa family, like Aline's, was of Spanish origin, and owed its rank, according to Malingue (1987, p. 22) to Gustave's grandfather, who had amassed a vast fortune in Peru.

1862

24 April
Birth in Reims of Henri Delavallée (1862-1943).

8 September
After obtaining the agreement of the family council, Aline sells FF 140 of 3% annuity through Léon Barbault, a Paris stockbroker, from the half belonging to her son, almost the whole of which is sent to Monsieur Loriol, the master of a Paris boarding school (A.D., Loiret, power of attorney); Loriol's was a boy's school at 49 Rue d'Enfer specialising in preparation for the École navale (*Annuaire-Almanach du commerce*, Didot-Bottin, 1862, p. 385, and 1865, p. 414). There (see Leprohon, 1975, p. 28), Gauguin took his first fencing lessons with Grisier, later fencing master to the Czar of Russia. 'His goal at that time was to become a sailor. The family dreamed of his going to the École navale, but this was so uphill a task that, when the time for the exam came round, the schoolboy Gauguin, more enamoured of freedom than work, was not competent to sit it' (Rotonchamp, 1906, republ. 1925, pp. 10-11).

9 December
Birth of Ernest Ponthier de Chamaillard (1862-1930/31) at the château de Gourlizon, near Quimper (Thuars, November 1957, p. 3) to a family of legal tradition (*noblesse de robe)*, with strong political affiliations (Merlhès, 1984, p. 503, note 280). De Chamaillard spent eight years at the collège Saint-François-Xavier in Vannes (Le Bihan, 1978, p. 120).

1863

Guillaumin, one of the revolutionary group of Impressionists, takes part in the Salon des refusés, with his friend Pissarro.

1864

According to Perruchot (1961, pp. 37-38), Gauguin's results at the Loriol school 'were too unsatisfactory, and he returned to Orleans, where, this time, he entered secondary school. It was to be his last year of school'. However, no trace of this year in the Orleans school has been discovered (Marks-Vandenbroucke, 1956, p. 32).

4 April
Birth of Ferdinand Loyen du Puigaudeau (1864-1930) at Nantes, to a family belonging to the gentry but now involved in business. At ten, Ferdinand was entrusted to his maternal uncle Henri de Chateaubriant, well before his parents' divorce in c. 1879-1880. Chateaubriant, an art lover, enthusiastically supported Ferdinand's learning to draw. While at a Jesuit school in Paris, which his father had insisted on, Du Puigaudeau escaped over the wall of the school and, thanks to his family's relative wealth, was able to undertake study tours in Italy, then set off, officially as emigrant, for Tunisia; he returned to France disappointed and ill. At nineteen, he declared himself a painter, and remained resolutely hostile to all official teaching (Merlhès, 1989, p. 26; Laurentin, 1989, pp. 17-21).

9 November
Birth in Paris of Paul Henri Sérusier (1864-1927), son of a glover (Guicheteau-Boutaric, 1976, p. 159).

24 November
Birth of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec at Albi (1864-1901).

1865

Aline Gauguin gives up her business as a dressmaker (she is no longer mentioned in the 1866 Bottin). She is next heard of as manageress of the company Mmes. Palmyre, Chartier et Cie, dressmakers, founded in 1833 and located at 13 Rue Laffitte (*Annuaire-Almanach du commerce*, Didot-Bottin, 1833, 1865; A.D., Loiret, Gauguin-Chazal inventory). Aline now lives in the verdant suburbs of Paris, 3 Rue de la Paix in the village of l'Avenir (on the Romainville road, now Rue de Paris) in the Pantin quarter, which was incorporated into the new Commune des Lilas on 24 July 1867 (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, testament of Aline Gauguin).
These various changes may suggest that she knew that she was ill, especially since she set about preparing her will. **On 10 July**, she deposited her marriage contract with *maître* Dubec, at Orleans, having previously travelled there on the **8th** to draw up, in the presence of Isidore, an inventory of Clovis' assets at the time of his death. This inventory was never finalized and was not therefore followed by a liquidation of the joint-estate assets of Gauguin-Chazal (A.D., Loiret). **On 13 November**, Aline drafted her will, in which she instructed Mme Aiguesparses – her landlady, the wife of Pierre Louis, cabinet maker (mairie de Pantin, electoral roll of 1867) – to keep her personal belongings carefully and to rent the apartment furnished with her furniture until these came into Marie's property (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine).
Meanwhile, as of 1 October, Aline was due the back interest on the life insurance taken out by Clovis, in the form of a sum of FF 70 and FF 277 of 3% annuity (i.e. a capital of FF 3,176 at November 1867 rates); she retained the usufruct of the half of this due to the children (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, 2nd inventory of Aline Gauguin, deceased; fiscal accounts).

'Young Paul', having by now lost all chance of entering the École navale (since seventeen was the age limit for the competitive exam) 'it was decided that he should enter the merchant navy' (Rotonchamp, 1906, republ. 1925, p. 11). **On 2 December**, Gauguin was entered in the Novices' Roll as 'coming from his parents' home' (A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P5/126).

1860

1 January
Paris boundaries expanded; the city is divided into twenty arrondissements.
The various Italian states are gradually united with Piedmont, and France receives Nice and Savoy.



Haussmann Presenting to the Emperor his Plan for the Annexation of the Eleven Communes, painting by Yvon. Paris, Bibliothèque historique de la Ville.

Summer

France occupies Syria.

25 January
First of three concerts organised and conducted by Wagner (1813-1883) takes place at the Théâtre italien.

1861

14 March
Creation of the Kingdom of Italy with its capital in Florence.

Work starts on the construction of the Opéra de Paris under Charles Garnier.

3 January
Jules Pasdeloup, spokesman for new music, for the first time programmes a Wagner work (extracts from *Lohengrin*).

13 March
Paris première of Wagner's opera *Tannhaüser*.

1 April
Baudelaire's *Richard Wagner et Tannhaüser à Paris* appears in *La Revue européenne*.

1862

Beginning of the Mexican war, soon waged by France alone, and intended to establish a Catholic empire for Maximilian of Austria as a counterpoise to the United states.

5 June
Annam cedes Cochin China to France.

23 February
Ernest Renan's inaugural lecture at the Collège de France.



Ernest Renan. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

November
Victor Hugo: *Les Misérables*.
Leconte de Lisle: *Poèmes Barbares* (1862-1878).



Charles Leconte de Lisle, photographed by Nadar, 1873. Photo: BNF.

1863

11 April
France imposes a protectorate in Cambodia.

8 June
Mexico occupied by French troops.
Paris: Work continues on Haussmann's large-scale reform of the Parisian cityscape. Foundation of the Crédit Lyonnais.

15 May
The Salon des refusés is officially opened by the Emperor; Manet exhibits *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, to general outrage.



The Salon des Refusés, caricature by Gillot, in *La Vie parisienne*, 11 July 1863. Photo: BNF.

13 August
Death of Eugène Delacroix.
Renan: *Vie de Jésus*.
Berlioz: *The Trojans*.

1864

Archduke Maximilian of Austria, proclaimed Emperor by a *junta*, arrives in Mexico.

25 May
Napoléon III grants the right to strike.
Founding of the Société Générale.

22-27 February
Sale at Drouot of what remained in Delacroix' studio on his death: Gustave Arosa, whose name appears in Delacroix's journal, buys numerous works (Perruchot, 1961, p. 39).
Cézanne, rejected by the Salon, returns in dismay to Aix-en-Provence.
Offenbach: *La Belle Hélène* (libretto by Meilhac and Halévy).
Pasteurisation invented.

1865

October
The United States demands that French troops in Mexico be recalled.

At the Salon, Manet's *Olympia* is considered scandalous. The 'Manet gang'



Édouard Manet, photographed by Nadar, c. 1865. Photo: BNF.

is formed at this time, and meets regularly in the Batignolles quarter of Paris. The café Guerbois thus becomes, from 1866, the cradle of what was later dubbed 'Impressionism'.
Mallarmé: first edition of *L'Après-midi d'un faune*.
Death of Proudhon, the philosopher of libertarian socialism.



Joseph Proudhon, photographed by Nadar, c. 1862. Photo: BNF.

Claude Bernard: *Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale*.
The laws of heredity defined by Mendel (Austria).
Invention of reinforced concrete by Monier.

He was taken on by the Union des chargeurs réunis and embarked on the *Luzitano*, whose home port was Le Havre, as a trainee officer. The *Luzitano* was a fine three-master of 654 tons, commanded by Captain Tombarel, who set course for Rio de Janeiro on **6 December** (A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P6/282 and 6 P6/290, muster roll of the *Luzitano*).

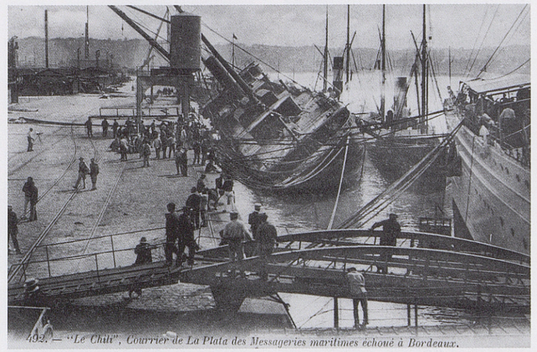
1866

The *Luzitano* arrives in Rio de Janeiro on **11 January** 'The crossing was a beautiful one, with no storms' (*Avant et après*, pp. 149-150). In Rio, Gauguin had his first experience of love (*Avant et après*, pp. 149-150). He set off again for Le Havre on 7 **February**, arriving 27 **March** (A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P6/282 and 6 P6/290, muster roll of the *Luzitano*). Gauguin again set sail on the *Luzitano* on **2 May** with the same destination, captain and wage: FF 20 per month.
Arriving on **15 June** in Rio, he left again on **20 July** for Le Havre where he arrived on **1 September** (A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P6/290, muster roll of the *Luzitano*).

Probably around **1 July**, Aline moved to Saint-Cloud (she does not appear in the census, whose closing date was 12 June 1866), close to her friends the Arosas, in a little house behind the church, at 2 Rue de l'Hospice. She had a verbal agreement with her landlord François de Paoli Pau, domiciled at 12 Rue de la Paix, Paris, and apparently paid FF 100 per quarter for the use of a home comprising cellar, attic, a room for the maid (Jeanne Marguerite Miles, unmarried), a well-lit kitchen giving onto the street, a dining-room, a salon giving onto the street and a little room giving onto the garden, lit by two casements opening onto terrace and garden (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, affixing of seals to the residence of Aline Gauguin, 1867; 1st inventory of Aline Gauguin, deceased; 2nd inventory with receipt of rent due on 1 October 1866; cadastral register). Defined as a woman of independent means, Aline seems to have possessed FF 1,600 of annual income, if we include the income of her children – a very modest sum (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, fiscal accounts of the estate of Aline Gauguin, 1867).

On his return from Brazil, Gauguin saw his mother **in late August 1866**, for the last time.

27 October
Gauguin embarks at Le Havre on the *Chili*, a three-master of 1,277 tons belonging to the company Bordes Le



The *Chili* capsized at Bordeaux. Photo: Paris, Musée de la Marine.

Quellec (cf. *Chronology*, 1867) commanded by Captain Toury of Saint-Malo. At eighteen, Gauguin was already a second-lieutenant, with a wage of FF 50 per month (A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P6/309, muster roll of the *Chili*).

6 November
The *Chili* arrives in Cardiff.

1 December
The *Chili* takes on coal and leaves Cardiff for Valparaiso in Chile [A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P6/309, muster roll of the *Chili*, Doc. 11; this muster roll, with Docs. 1-11, was studied in 1973 by Maïotte Dauphite, enabling her to refute the theory of Perruchot (1961, p. 43), according to which Gauguin went round the world on the sail-powered *Chili*].

1867

27 March
The *Chili* arrives in Valparaiso and unloads its cargo of coal in Chilean coastal ports.

29 March
The *Chili* leaves Valparaiso for Carrizal Bajo and the coast (Doc. 9).

13 June
Arrival at Arica (extreme north of Chile).

3 July
The *Chili* leaves Arica, having embarked passengers for Le Havre (Docs. 8 and 11).

7 July
Aline Gauguin dies in Saint-Cloud shortly after her forty-second birthday and is buried at Père-Lachaise (letter from Marie Uribe to Victor Segalen, 1 April 1904); Gustave Arosa, accompanied by Jean-Jacques Combastel, Aline's neighbour, declares her death at the mairie (mairie de Saint-Cloud, register of deaths, 1867, no. 47).
Her will begins thus: 'I declare that I give [my children] Monsieur Gustave Arosa as guardian; I beg him to accept this, and ask him and his dear wife to maintain the tender affection for them that he has always shown'. She left to her daughter her furniture, linen, lace and cashmeres, and to Paul her portraits and pictures, her one hundred and ten books, her watch and chain, her trinkets and her grandfather's sealing ring. 'My express will is that Marie should be placed for the year of her mourning in a boarding school in Orleans [after which] she will return to Monsieur Arosa who will find her a place in business if he deems fit… As to my dear son, he will have to make his own career, since he has done so little to endear himself to my friends that he will find himself completely abandoned' (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, holograph will dated 13 November 1865, quoted in the second inventory of Aline Gauguin, deceased).

8 July
Accompanied by his cousin, Mme Dupuis, Isidore Gauguin arrives immediately from Orleans for the affixing of seals on the residence of the late Aline Gauguin (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine).

12 July
In the presence of Gustave Arosa and Isidore Gauguin, deputy tutor to the two children (both still minors), *maître* Pluche draws up the inventory of Aline Gauguin, deceased. The inventory indicates living conditions respectable but devoid of luxury. Among the hundred or so works in Aline's library, we note great classics (such as Homer, Shakespeare and La Fontaine) and history books then enjoying a particular vogue, such as Larmartine's *L'Histoire des girondins* and Henri Martin's *L'Histoire de France*, both by illustrious republicans (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, 1st inventory of Aline Gauguin, deceased).
Gustave Arosa declares before a notary that he himself has paid the rent outstanding, and that a friend of the family has settled all the debts with which the estate of Mme Gauguin was encumbered, along with the medical costs arising from the fatal malady and the funeral costs. Was this friend Arosa himself, or Paul Belon, lawyer at 8 Rue Cadet, Paris, and Aline's confidential agent? She had named him her executor, but he had declined this function on 10 July (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, 2nd inventory of Aline Gauguin, deceased; breaking of seals for the inventory; notarized deed enclosed with this inventory).
The fiscal authorities estimated Aline's assets at FF 10,639.03, of which FF 3,973.02 was payable from the estate to the children, whose assets would thus amount to FF 19,625. They thus inherited FF 6,666 from their mother, according to the tax authorities. However, the distribution of assets having given rise to errors, these detailed figures are not accurate. It is clearer to note that, on the death of their mother, the children between them possessed FF 26,291; this figure does not include the double house in Orleans, which also belonged to them (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, Direction générale de l'Enregistrement et des Domaines, Sèvres office, register of declarations of transfers through decease, 22 November 1867).

21 July
The *Chili* stops in Peru at Molle (Mollendo?), then at Callao (Doc. 4). On the return leg, it stops at Iquique (Chile) on **14 August** (Doc. 10). Morice (1919, p. 16), writes: Gauguin 'was in the Indies when his mother died of her griefs and illness'. This presumably refers to the West Indies, and it seems plausible that Gauguin was informed of his mother's death by a letter that reached Fort-de-France after a 13-day crossing (aboard a vessel of the Compagnie générale transatlantique that had been plying the Saint-Nazaire-Fort-de-France-Vera Cruz route since 1862). At Fort-de-France, there was a representative of the Bordes Le Quellec company (cf. Mme Dauphite's 1973 study).

13 December
The *Chili* returns to Le Havre after a voyage of thirteen months and fifteen days (A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P6/309, muster roll of the *Chili*).
His mother having died five months previously, and with his sister Marie now a boarder at the Vautrer school in the cloître Saint-Aignan at Orleans, Paul found only the Arosa family at Saint-Cloud (Merlhès, 1984, p. 323, note 4).

1868

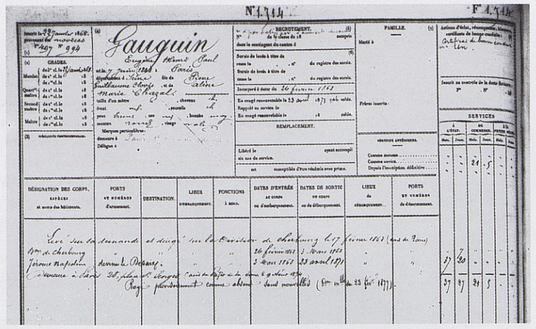
22 January
At his own request, Gauguin is enrolled in the French Navy (A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P5/165, List of seamen and ships, register of enrolled seamen, 9th series), to do his military service.

26 February
Gauguin is drafted into the Cherbourg division as seaman, 3rd class, registered at Le Havre, number 1714. Profession: seaman. Description: Height: 1.63m. Hair: Chestnut. Eyes: brown. Nose: average. Forehead: high. Mouth: average. Chin: round. Face: oval.
(A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P5/165).

3 March
Gauguin is posted to the *Jérôme-Napoléon*, a corvette converted for use as an imperial yacht immediately after its launch in 1866. It was christened by its namesake, Prince Napoléon ('Plon-Plon'), nephew to Napoleon I and cousin to Napoleon III, and placed at his disposal (A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P5/165).


Prince Jérôme Napoléon ('Plon-Plon'), photographed by Nadar. Photo: BNF.

Having been a coal-trimmer for some weeks, Gauguin became quartermaster in time for the cruise taking Prince Napoléon and Princess Clotilde from Toulon to the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea (Perruchot, 1961, p. 46).


Page showing Gauguin's enrolment into the French navy. Collection of the Archives of Seine-Maritime.

1866

3-8 September
Congress of the International at Geneva.

Offenbach: *La Vie parisienne*.
Brahms: *A German Requiem*.
Zola publishes articles in favour of Manet and Pissarro in *L'Événement* and in *La Revue du XIXe siècle*.


Émile Zola, c. 1865.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

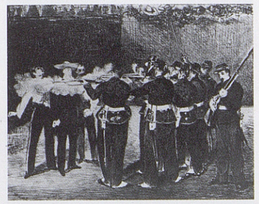
Construction of the church of Saint-Augustin by Baltard (completed 1871).
First transatlantic cable laid.
The propeller-driven ship *La Ville de Paris* crosses the Atlantic in nine days.

1867

Law on the creation of *sociétés anonymes* (limited companies).

February
After two years of unpopular combat against Mexican guerillas increasingly well-supported by the United States, French troops leave Mexico, which then rises against its Emperor.

19 June
Execution of Maximilian. In 1869, Manet's lithograph of the event is censured.


The Execution of the Emperor Maximilian, lithograph by Édouard Manet, late 1867.
Photo: BNF.

2-7 September
Second congress of the International, at Lausanne.

October
Creation of secondary education for girls.
Karl Marx: *Capital* (first volume).

14 January
Death of Ingres and retrospective of his work.

April-November
Exposition universelle in Paris, at which Millet's *L'Angélus* is shown. Special pavilions for Courbet (110 pictures) and Manet (50 pictures).

31 August
Death of Baudelaire.
Gounod: *Romeo and Juliet*.
Machine gallery by Krantz and Eiffel at the Exposition universelle.


Charles Gounod, photographed by Nadar. Photo: BNF.

1868

20 March
French section of the International fails to reverse sentence on appeal.

6-17 September
Third congress of the International, in Brussels.

Discovery of the Altamira cave paintings in Spain.
In Paris, the Concerts Pasdeloup increasingly often programme Wagner: Overture to the *Flying Dutchman* (**26 January**), overture to *Tannhaüser* (**23 February**), prelude to *Lohengrin* (**19 April**).

21 June
World première of *The Mastersingers* in Munich.

31 July
Foundation of the École pratique des hautes études by Victor Duruy.
Completion of Labrouste's Bibliothèque nationale; begun in 1858, it used cast iron and metallic structures.


Victor Duruy.
Photo: Pierson.

28 April
Birth at Lille of Émile Henri Bernard (A.D., Nord, Lille birth register, 1868, no. 1911). His father was a well-off clerk in the textile industry until the 1870 war, which ruined his employer; he then became a salesman for a Roubaix company (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 2).

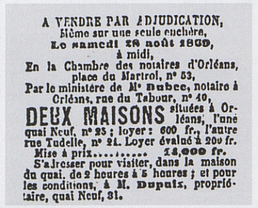
September
The *Jérôme-Napoléon* crosses the Channel and goes up the Thames to London (Perruchot, 1961, p. 46).

1869

April-May
Cruise of the *Jérôme-Napoléon* from Marseilles to Bastia (Corsica), Naples, Corfu, and up the Adriatic to Trieste and Venice (List of ships, cited by Perruchot, 1961, p. 46).

June
Paul having now attained his majority, the Gauguin children are permitted to manage their own assets (A.D., Hauts-de-Seine, testament of Aline Gauguin).

28 August
Paul and Marie immediately attempt to sell the double house in Orleans by auction, with a reserve price of FF 14,000, but there are no takers (*Journal du Loiret*, 7 August 1869, no. 187, last page).

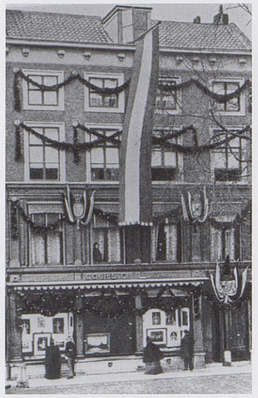

A VENDRE PAR ADJUDICATION,
Sième sur une seule enchère,
Le samedi 28 août 1869,
à midi,
En la Chambre des notaires d'Orléans,
place du Martroi, n° 53,
Par le ministère de Me Babee, notaire à
Orléans, rue du Tabour, n° 40,
DEUX MAISONS situées à Orléans, l'une
quai Neuf, n° 25 ; loyer : 600 fr., l'autre
rue Tudelle, n° 21. Loyer évalué à 200 fr.
Mise à prix..... 14,000 fr.
S'adresser pour visiter, dans la maison
du quai, de 2 heures à 5 heures ; et pour
les conditions, à M. Dupuis, propriétaire, quai Neuf, 31.

Advertisement for the sale of the Orléans houses in the *Journal du Loiret*, 7 August 1869. Orléans, Médiathèque.

25 September-29 October
Gauguin is hospitalised (A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P5/165).

Vincent Van Gogh becomes the youngest employee of the Goupil gallery's branch in The Hague. He had been recruited for Goupil by his uncle, also named Vincent Van Gogh, who was a partner of Adolphe Goupil and Léon Boussod from 1861 to 1872, and sleeping partner from 1872 to 1878 (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 90; *Degas* […] *Portraits inédits par Michel Manzi*, Musée Goupil, Bordeaux, 30 May-30 August 1997, p. 10, note 5).


Léon Boussod. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.


The façade of the Goupil gallery (later Boussod, Valadon et Cie in The Hague (from Tralbaut, 1969).


Paul Durand-Ruel, painting by Hugues Merle. Photo: Durand-Ruel Archives.


Adolphe Goupil. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

15 October
Paul Durand-Ruel (1831-1922) transfers his gallery to 16 Rue Laffitte, with a second entrance at 11 Rue Le Peletier (Venturi, 1939, vol. II, p. 173).

1870

31 March
The sale of the Orleans house for FF 14,000 is at last concluded. For this purpose, Gauguin, 'seaman, 3rd class, on board the *Jérôme-Napoléon*, legally domiciled in Paris, currently in Toulon for his military service', gave power of attorney on 16 March to his cousin Dupuis, who had been living since before 1855 at 31 quai Tudelle (A.D., Loiret, death certificate of Guillaume Gauguin-Juranville). Marie, his sister, unemployed, after leaving her boarding school apparently returned to live with her former guardian, 5 place (or Rue) Bréda, Paris (A.D., Loiret). The house was demolished that same year and replaced by a new building in 1872 (mairie d'Orléans, supplementary cadastral file card, section L, 8093).

1 July
Gauguin is promoted to seaman, 2nd class (A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P5/165); however this was delayed until the end of his twenty-eight months service on the *Jérôme-Napoléon*, on grounds of insubordination (Perruchot, 1961, p. 47).

3 July
From Cherbourg, the *Jérôme-Napoléon* cruises toward North Cape (Nordkapp) for an observation mission in Lapland and Spitzberg at the initiative of Prince Napoléon (who had explored Greenland in 1856). The Prince is accompanied by some scientists and his friend Ernest Renan (Perruchot, 1961, p. 47).

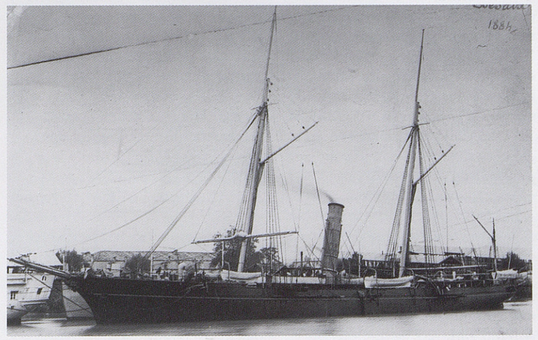
8 July
Arrival in Bergen (Norway) after anchoring at Peterhead in Scotland (Perruchot, 1961, p. 47).

13 July, evening
The *Jérôme-Napoléon* crosses the Arctic Circle (Renan to his wife, 14 July 1870, in *Lettres familières*, 1947, p. 210).

14 July
The yacht reaches Tromsö island (Norway).

17 July
At six in the morning, Plon-Plon learns that a declaration of war with Prussia is imminent; he gives orders to weigh anchor (Perruchot, 1961, p. 47).

21 July
The *Jérôme-Napoléon* reaches Boulogne after stopping at Aberdeen. She is to join the North Sea squadron (Perruchot, 1961, p. 48).
Having taken on supplies and refuelled at Cherbourg, on 25 July she begins patrolling Danish and German waters, going as far as the Gulf of Danzig (Perruchot, 1961, p. 48).


The *Jérôme Napoléon*. Photo: Paris, Musée de la Marine.

26-30 August
The *Jérôme-Napoléon* puts in at Copenhagen (Perruchot, 1961, p. 48).

As of 4 September
The *Jérôme-Napoléon* is renamed *Desaix* (after the Bonapartist general).

October
The *Desaix* captures four German ships in succession, including the *Franziska* (11 October). Gauguin formed part of the detachment despatched to guard this prize (Perruchot, 1961, p. 48).

1 November
Gauguin leaves the *Franziska* (Perruchot, 1961, p. 48).

25 November
Birth of Maurice Denis (1870-1943) at Granville, where his parents had taken refuge during the Franco-Prussian war; he spent the rest of his life in Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

A number of artists and dealers flee Paris, now under siege, and go to London, where they discover Constable and Turner. In December, Durand-Ruel organises an exhibition in London, where he meets Monet and Pissarro (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 31). On his return, for a period of two or three years, Durand-Ruel becomes the main purchaser of Impressionist paintings (Merlhès, 1984, p. 352, note 59).

Mid-December
The *Desaix* steers for Bordeaux (Perruchot, 1961, p. 48).
'I served in the 1870 war and I have seen prisoners and the dead, all that at the caprice of the few; I don't like war' (*Les Guêpes*, no. 5, 12 June 1899, in 'Paul Gauguin […] Les Guêpes', *Journal de la Société des Océanistes*, December 1965, p. 26).

1871

14 January
Mme François Arosa, Gustave's mother, mentions in her journal that the Arosa family, accompanied by Marie Gauguin, has fled Paris for the island of Jersey; she cites the visit on 1 February of Marie, nicknamed 'Bichette' and Marguerite, Gustave's daughter (Malingue, 1987, p. 26), thus revealing that Marie Gauguin was treated as if she were a member of the family.


Marie, Gauguin's sister, painting. Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental Maurice Denis 'Le Prieuré'.

14 February
Birth in Lille of Madeleine Sophie Héloïse Bernard (1871-19 November 1895), sister of the painter Émile (A.D., Nord, Lille birth register, 1871, no. 756).

17 February
The Arosas learn that their Saint-Cloud house has been hit by a shell (Journal of Mme F. Arosa, cited in Malingue, 1987, p. 26) that went straight through the house without exploding (Malingue, 1987, p. 28).
'My mother had kept a few Peruvian vases and above all a fair number of figurines made in solid silver just the way it comes out of the mine. The whole lot perished in the St.-Cloud fire set off by the Prussians. A fairly


Place de l'Hospice, Saint-Cloud, after the destruction of the town by the Prussian army in 1871. Saint-Cloud, Musée municipal.

1869

16 June
Strike at La Ricamarie (Loire). Troops open fire: 14 deaths.

6-12 September
Fourth congress of the International in Basel.

16 November
Opening of Lesseps's Suez Canal.

1 September
France defeated at the Battle of Sedan; Napoléon III is captured, France surrenders. When news of the rout reaches Paris, the Empire falls. **4 September**: Léon Gambetta and Jules Favre proclaim the 3rd Republic and hail the establishment of a 'government of national defence'.

19 September
Siege of Paris begins.


The Opening of the Suez Canal, engraving. Photo: BNF.

8 December
Opening of the 20th Ecumenical Council (Vatican 1).

Carpeaux completes *La Danse* for the façade of the Opéra de Paris.

8 March
Death of Berlioz.


Hector Berlioz, photographed by Nadar, c. 1863. Photo: BNF.

22 September
World première of Wagner's *The Rhinegold* in Munich.
Verlaine: *Fêtes galantes*.
Hartmann (Germany): *Philosophy of the Unconscious*.

1870

5 January
Haussmann dismissed.

8 May
Napoléon III's referendum.

19 July
France declares war on Prussia.


2 September: Napoléon III hands his sword to Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, lithograph. Brescia, Museo del Risorgimento.

22 March
Belgian première of Wagner's *Lohengrin* at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels.
Victor Hugo returns from a twenty-year exile in the Channel Islands.
Verlaine: *La Bonne Chanson*.
Schliemann begins excavations at Troy.

1871

4 January
Manuel Ruiz Zorilla (1833-1895), elected President of the Cortes in 1870, places Amadeo of Savoy on the Spanish throne, and Amadeo names him President of Spain.

25 January
Saint-Cloud set on fire by the German army.

28 January
Armistice and capitulation of Paris.

12 February
Meeting of the new Assemblée nationale in Bordeaux; it is monarchist in tendency.

substantial book collection, and with it almost all our family papers' (*Avant et Après*, p. 110). Some souvenirs and official papers were seen by Malingue (1987, p. 25) in 1957 at Pola Gauguin's home, in Copenhagen. Despite what Gauguin says, no South American objects were noted in the post-mortem inventory of his mother's effects.
The *Desaix* cruises off the Atlantic ports from mid-December 1870 to **late February 1871**, when the peace preliminaries were signed (Perruchot, 1961, p. 48).

March
Durand-Ruel organises an Impressionist exhibition in his London gallery, thus inaugurating a cycle of two annual exhibitions in London (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 31).

23 April
After 37 months and 27 days, Gauguin is discharged at Toulon from his military service by a renewable six-month leave of absence, receiving a good conduct certificate (A.D., Seine-Maritime, 6 P5/165). He returns to Saint-Cloud to find everything in ruins. 'The maritime life had developed and matured him physically, but intellectually, he had not yet attained a state of full consciousness. In certain respects, his intelligence was still dormant […]. Paul was welcomed into the home of [his guardian] Gustave Arosa (1818-1883) as a guest, and there his intellectual horizons broadened. His benefactor was interested in literature and art'. (Pola Gauguin, 1938, pp. 19-20). Like his brother Achille (1827-?), Gustave was a discriminating collector of paintings (Delacroix, Corot, etc.), porcelain, china, Pre-Columbian pottery, and, with his friend Nadar, a pioneer of photography; he attempted to put the collotype process to commercial use [collections of photos of classic paintings or landscapes, etc., books on Trajan's Column by W. Fröhner, C. Yriarte's *Les Frises du Parthénon par Phidias* (1868), the life and work of Prud'hon by C. Clément (1872), A. Demmin's *Histoire de la céramique* (1875), all illustrated by Gustave Arosa, some of them now in the Cabinet des Estampes de la Bibliothèque nationale].


Gustave Arosa, photographed by Nadar. Photo: BNF.

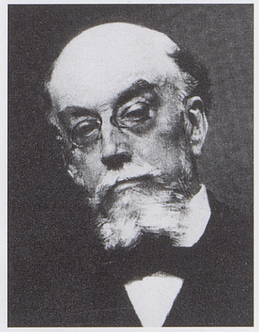

The young Paul Gauguin. Photo: Harlingue-Viollet.

In a block of flats built in 1870 at 15 (now no. 21) Rue La Bruyère, not far from the home of Gustave Arosa (A.P;, electoral roll, 9th arrondissement, 1873: profession not noted), Gauguin becomes the first tenant of a 4th-floor flat. Access was by the service stairs to the left of the courtyard. It comprised a hall, dining room, two rooms with fireplace, toilets and kitchen (A.P., cadastre memorandum books, 1871).

June
The Pissarros leave England for Louveciennes (Venturi, 1939, vol. I, p. 27).

1872

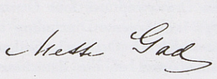
At this point, Gustave Arosa is living at 5 Rue Bréda (now Rue Henri-Monnier) in the 9th arrondissement and possesses a country house in Saint-Cloud at 14 Rue du Calvaire. The 1873 Bottin describes him as partner in a stock-broker's. The fact that he had a large share of his capital invested with P. Bertin, and the beginning of a period of feverish activity on the stock market after the disasters of war, made it easy to have Gauguin taken on as an intermediate broker. Bertin's was a major stock-broker, address: 1 Rue Laffitte (*Annuaire-Almanach du commerce*, Didot-Bottin, 1872; A.P., electoral rolls, 1874: description 'stock broker's clerk').
Gauguin was living in the 9th arrondissement, but also at Saint-Cloud, with his sister, who had her own home – according to the letters of Marie Heegaard (Merlhès VIII, which should probably be dated early January 1873; Merlhès IX of summer 1873, quoted at greater length in Bodelsen, 1961, p. 32; at her marriage, she no doubt gave her tutor's address as her own purely for official purposes).


Monsieur Bertin, painting by Aimé Morot. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.


Self-Portrait by Émile Schuffenecker, 1880 (from Porro, 1992).

Schuffenecker, who had received a medal in 1869 from the Union centrale des beaux-arts appliqués à l'industrie, left his job as assistant commissioner at the Trésor public on **28 February**. Shortly afterwards he began working during the day at Galichon's and was taken on in a modest clerical capacity by Bertin's, working evenings. There he met Gauguin (Grossvogel, 1980-1981, p. 20).

October
Mette Gad arrives in Paris, accompanying her friend Marie Heegaard, the daughter of a rich Danish industrialist, sometime before **26 October**, the date of Marie's first letter to her mother (Bodelsen, 1961, p. 32). The two young women take lodgings in Pauline Fouignet's boarding house at 51 Rue des Martyrs, as recommended by Magda Estrup, the daughter of the Danish minister who had employed Mette as governess (Malingue, 1987, p. 31; cf. *Chronology*, c. 1880); theirs is a little 5th-floor room (Bodelsen, 1961, p. 32; Malingue, 1987, p. 31; Merlhès, 1989, p. 17). According to her great-grandson, Mme Fouignet de Pellegrue was the widow of an officer who died in Strasbourg in 1870, and friendly with the Arosa family; she took in as boarders a cosmopolitan clientele selected through her connections, and gave music and language lessons. 'The house was full of life, and every Saturday evening there was a party, with singing and music-making and dancing', notes Bodelsen, on the basis of Marie Heegaard's letter of 26 October (1961, p. 32).


Mette Gad's signature, 1873.

21 November
In a letter to her father, Marie Heegaard for the first time mentions the Arosas, who have invited Mette and Marie to a Friday *soirée* (Merlhès I).

c. 22 December
Marie Heegaard, writing to her family, mentions Gauguin for the first time: 'Friday evening, I was at the Arosa's *soirée* […] There is a young Monsieur Goguain* who secretly pines for Mette, but she remains stony-hearted; you know, she's blossomed here […] Mette really stands out. Everyone here finds her very beautiful' (Bodelsen, 1961, p. 32). According to Pola Gauguin (1938, p. 36), Paul became acquainted with Mette one night when he went to dine at the Fouignet boarding house, which was around the corner from his home.


Gustave Arosa and his family: his wife Zoé, Marguerite – 'Margot' – kneeling, Victorine Marie and her husband, Calzado. Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental Maurice Denis 'Le Prieuré'.

Achille Arosa, an art-lover like his brother, commissions four over-door paintings on the theme of the seasons from Pissarro for his private house at 44 Rue de Bassano (Pissarro-Venturi 1939, nos. 183-186, pp. 104-105). Pissarro, who has often lived at Pontoise since 1866, moves into 16 Rue Malle-branche. He is soon joined in Pontoise by Guillaumin, and then, in August, by Cézanne (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 32).


Marie Heegard, drawing by Gauguin. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

That same year, Anquetin enters the lycée Corneille in Rouen, where he meets Édouard Dujardin (born 1861).

1873

Early January
Gauguin and Marguerite Arosa each make a portrait of Marie Heegaard at

17 February 1871
Thiers becomes 'Head of the Executive Power' by popular demand.



Adolphe Thiers (Head of the Executive), caricature. Photo: BNF.

26 February
Signature of peace preliminaries.

3 March
Formation of the Comité central de la garde nationale of the twenty arrondissements of Paris, which preaches war to the last man, a democratic government concerned with workers' conditions, and demands the election of a Parisian municipality or *commune* chosen directly by the people.

18-19 March
After the bloody confrontation on Montmartre hill and the capture of the Hôtel de Ville by the insurgents, the government's flight to Versailles leaves a power-vacuum, which the Comité central hastily fills. This is the start of the Commune.

26 March
Election of the municipal council of Paris, which becomes a thorn in the government's flesh.

10 May
The Treaty of Frankfurt is a disaster for France; she must cede Alsace-Lorraine and pay an indemnity of 5 billion francs. To this end, Thiers issues government loans.

21-28 May
The *Semaine sanglante*. With the complicity of Bismarck, Thiers easily contrives the entry of the Versaillais into Paris. The Communards, in despair, set fire to the Tuileries palace, the Hôtel de ville, etc. Ferocious repression follows: a quarter of the Parisian working-class is killed. By **June**, Germany occupies France from the border to Saint-Denis.

31 August
Thiers is appointed President of the French Republic (provisional regime). Gustave Courbet, President of the Artistic Commission early on in the Commune, is unjustly implicated in the levelling of the colonne Vendôme (16 May) and sentenced to six months in prison.


Levelling of the Colonne Vendôme During the Commune, engraving. Photo: Collection Viollet.



Barricade in rue Saint-Sébastien during the Paris Commune. Photo: Collection Viollet.

Zola publishes the first novel of the *Rougon-Macquart* cycle (20 volumes).
Rimbaud: *Le Bateau ivre*.
Pierre Loti in Tahiti.
Charles Darwin: *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*.

1872

At the Salon, Puvis de Chavannes' *Hope*.
Bizet: *The Woman of Arles*.
Jules Verne: *Around the world in 80 days*.


Jules Verne and 'Le Tour du Monde en Quatre-Vingt Jours', caricature. Photo: BNF.

Wundt (Germany): first psychology laboratory, in Leipzig.

1873

11 February
In Spain, Amadeo of Savoy abdicates, and a Republic is voted that very same day.

Saint-Cloud: 'Both portraits are quite good likenesses…' Paul is now working in accounts and settlements (Merlhès VIII, which should be re-dated to early January).

The announcement of the engagement of Paul and Mette reaches the Heegaard family in Copenhagen in late January (Bodelsen, 1961, p. 33) 'Mlle Mette was bound to encounter a great many admirers in France, the originality of her character and the straightforwardness of her feelings have won her universal esteem here, so I must consider myself very fortunate', Gauguin wrote to Mme Heegaard in early February (Merlhès 1).



Mette Gad, summer of 1873, Copenhagen (from Bodelsen, 1961).

January

Theo Van Gogh is taken on by Goupil, at first in the little Brussels branch, where he is to learn the trade (Stolwijk, 1999, p. 22).

25 February

For Shrove Tuesday, a fancy-dress ball at the Arosas, with costumes of crêpe paper. Marie Heegaard notes: 'I went as a fisherman's daughter as you can see from the enclosed drawing, which was given to me anonymously yesterday – no signature, but alas, I can guess who it came from, Monsieur Gauguin drew it' (Merlhès IV).
Quite unconcerned by appearances, Marie and Mette often go and find Gauguin in the bistrot where he habitually lunches, opposite the Bourse (Pola Gauguin, 1938, p. 37).

Wednesday 19 March

Another fancy-dress ball, this time at Mme Fouignet's. Marie Heegaard: 'I went as a goose-girl […]. Marguerite Arosa was a sutler […]. Paul Gauguin as an *incroyable* [young man or woman about town from the *Directoire*] in very tight chestnut costume with a triangular hat – he was wonderful. Mette too was an *incroyable* […]. On Saturday evening, we went to another fancy-dress ball at Mme Courcelle's' (Bodelsen, 1961, p. 33).

Early April

Madame Heegaard and her daughter Louise arrive from Denmark, perhaps in time for the 'exciting excursion to Saint-Cloud which will start early Sunday morning' [6 April]. 'There'll be twenty of us or more', Marie tells her mother (Bodelsen, 1961, p. 34).
During the summer, the Arosas organise great picnics at Saint-Cloud, to which the young folk are invited (Bodelsen, 1961, p. 34).

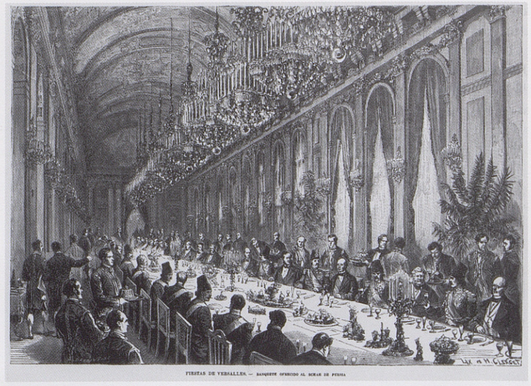
May

Vincent is transferred to the London branch of Goupil (Merlhès, 1984, p. 374, note 90).



Vincent Van Gogh, January 1873, photographed by J.M.W. de Louw. Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation).

In February, Mette had announced that she would return to Denmark, and **at some point in the spring** she did so, perhaps going back with the Heegaards.
'Paul is missing his beloved terribly and spends all his free time painting; he's really making a lot of progress. Last Sunday he painted for ten hours'. Thus Marie Heegaard to her sister, while writing about the Shah of Persia's visit to Paris (**6-19 July**). At the time of the firework display in honour of the Shah, on 8 July (C. Simond: *Paris de 1800-1900*, Paris, 1901, vol. III, p. 95) Marie notes that Gauguin now has rather more gentlemanly manners: 'You see that he's improving, much to his own advantage, he was rather lacking in polish' (Bodelsen, 1961, p. 34).



Banquet Given in Honour of the Shah of Persia at Versailles, engraving. Photo: BNF.

Late July-August

'Paul and Margot again seized on me, I posed for three and a half hours for them. The portrait by Paul is a particularly good likeness', Marie Heegaard notes (Bodelsen, 1961, p. 34; Merlhès IX). At this point Gauguin seems to buy his supplies from Mme Latouche's shop, *Couleurs fines et tableaux modernes*, 34 Rue Lafayette (as we see from a label on the back of *Clearing I, no. 6*).

2 October

Marie Heegaard prepares to leave Paris for Denmark, without waiting for her friend's marriage: 'I said good bye to Paul […]. It was no easy thing, I can tell you, I'm so fond of him, he's been like a kind brother to me […], I'll never find another friend like that.



Mette Gad the day of her marriage. Carjat photo from Marie Heegard's album (Wildenstein Institute Archives).

[…] he almost wept at the thought that I was going to see Mette now, he's head-over-heels' (Bodelsen, 1961, pp. 35-36).

Having fallen and badly injured her knee, Mette is convalescing with the Heegaards: 'I count on your taking good care of Mette so that she recovers quickly and gets over her injury […] You can imagine how strongly I desire to see her back here', Gauguin wrote (Merlhès 2: 1st fortnight of October).

22 November

Paul Gauguin, domiciled at 15 Rue de la Bruyère, marries Mette Gad at the mairie of the 9th arrondissement of Paris, Rue Drouot. The witnesses are Gustave Arosa, of independent means, François Arosa, his father, of independent means, aged eighty-seven, Paul Bertin, stockbroker, and Oscar Falbe, Secretary to the Danish Consulate (A.P., register of the minutes of marriages in the 9th arrondissement, 1873, f° 68, 1195). On the same day, at the Lutheran Evangelical temple de la Rédemption, Rue Chauchat, the religious wedding is celebrated. No marriage contract was made.



Paul Gauguin the day of his marriage. Carjat photo (Wildenstein Institute Archives).



Temple de la Rédemption, rue Chauchat.

The couple's address is given as 28 place Saint-Georges (Rédemption parish church, marriage register, 1873, volume D, f° 141, no. 111): apartment on the 4th floor with hall, dining room, living room, bedroom, toilet at the rear, kitchen (A.P., cadastre memorandum books, 1874).



28 place Saint-Georges, Paris.

'As soon as he was married, he began painting every Sunday, sometimes going to the *atelier* Colarossi, – but without thought of a teacher', Mette told Rotonchamp in a letter of 15 October 1905 (1906: republ. 1925, p. 18). But Mette, like Perruchot is wrong: the *académie* Colarossi did not open till 1881 (cf. *Chronology*, 1882, 'Around the middle of the year'). Nor is there any evidence in favour of Perruchot's assertion (1961, p. 59) that Schuffenecker dragged Gauguin along to evening painting classes as soon as they met, or at some point soon after Gauguin's marriage. But the two friends can hardly have failed to visit museums such as the Louvre and the many galleries in the area around the Bourse.

November

Theo takes the place of his brother Vincent Van Gogh at Goupil's branch in The Hague (Merlhès, 1984, p. 374, note 90).
Sérusier is at the école Fénelon (Guicheteau-Boutaric, 1976, p. 160).

1874

'We spent a charming winter in which we were a little too unsociable for others' tastes but nice and cosy in our little apartment', says Gauguin, writing to Mme Heegaard (Merlhès 3).

Early in the year

Durand-Ruel temporarily stops buying Impressionist works because of the economic crisis (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 33).

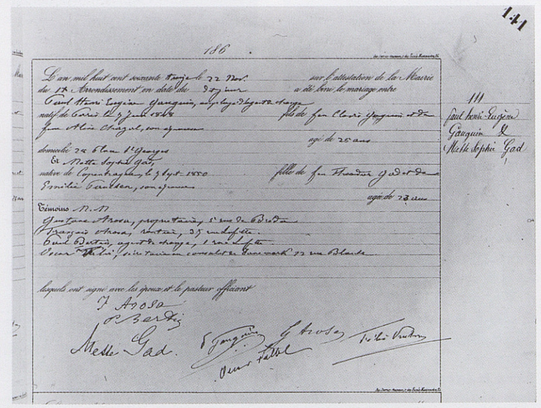
That year, according to Jean-Marie Cusinberche (trilingual catalogue of the exhibition *Gauguin and His Painter Friends in Brittany*, no place of publication, 1993, p. 150), Meijer De Haan, having taken lessons with the painter P.-F. Greive, passes the entrance exam of the Amsterdam Academy.

Late April

Frits Thaulow passes through Paris. Thaulow (1847-1906), a Norwegian painter, has been engaged to Mette's younger sister, Ingeborg (1852-1907), since 1872: 'We introduced him yesterday to the Arosas. I think he's intending to spend a month here and to paint in a French *atelier*' (Merlhès 3, 25 April).

31 August

Birth of Emil Gauguin at 28 place Saint-Georges: 'White as a swan, strong as Hercules, as to whether he's amiable or not, that I don't know, the odds are against it, his father's so surly' (Merlhès 5).
At the declaration of the birth, the witnesses are two bank clerks, José Sanjurjo, a Spaniard of 23 years age (first cousin to A. Mariano Ranoi, known as Adolphe Calzado, who was Gustave Arosa's son-in-law, having in 1866, married Arosa's elder daughter, Victorine Marie, and soon after opened



Page recording Gauguin's wedding, marriage register of the parish church (temple) de la Rédemption.



Emil Gauguin as a Baby, drawing by Gauguin. Cleveland (Ohio), The Cleveland Museum of Art (gift of Leonard C. Hanna, Jr.).



Georges Poloniini, drawing by Gauguin. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

24 May 1873
Election of Marshall Mac-Mahon (a legitimist) to the Presidency of the Republic. He favours a 'moral order'.



Marshall Mac-Mahon, President of the Republic, engraving (from C. Simond: *Paris de 1800 à 1900*, Paris, 1901, vol. III).

In **July**, thanks to Thiers' efforts to ensure the early payment of the 5 billion franc indemnity, German troops leave the last occupied départements.

26 July
Law declaring it in the public interest to construct a sanctuary of the Sacred Heart in Montmartre, as a votive offering ('may God help Paris and France') and in expiation of the anti-clericalism of the Commune, which began in Montmartre.

Late July-August
Courbet's trial is reopened; sentenced to pay the expenses of re-erecting the colonne Vendôme, he goes into exile in Switzerland.

A second Salon des refusés.
Verlaine fires two shots at Rimbaud.
Rimbaud: *Une saison en enfer*.

December
Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, Sisley, Degas, Cézanne, etc., having been systematically rejected by the Salon, and suffering, like Durand-Ruel, from the sudden economic downturn of late 1873, draw up the charter of the 'Société anonyme coopérative d'Artistes-peintres, Sculpteurs et Graveurs' (Rewald, 1946, 4th ed. 1973, pp. 310, 312-313) in order to exhibit their works. Portier is the Société's secretary (Venturi, 1939, vol. I, p. 37, vol. II, p. 212).
Foundation of the photographic firm Agfa.

1874

29 December
In Spain, an insurrection brings down the ephemeral federal democratic Republic and restores the Bourbon Alfonso XII. Ruiz Zorilla now attempts to reorient his party towards republicanism.

his own bank: cf. Merlhès, 1984, p. 326, note 18) and Georges Polonini, aged 25 (A.P., birth register of the 9th arrondissement, 1874, no. 1628). According to Pola Gauguin (see Malingue, 1959, p. 30), the couple then took on a maid whose first name was Justine, who later modelled for Gauguin (*Woman Sewing, 64*).

14 October
Marriage of Ingeborg Gad and Frits Thaulow (Marks-Vandenbroucke, 1956, p. 63).

Autumn
Having been transferred for a few weeks to the Paris branch of Goupil, Vincent Van Gogh develops a passionate love of the Bible. He returns to London (Merlhès, 1984, p. 374, note 90; Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 90).

1875

January
The Gauguin family moves to the 16th arrondissement, not far from the Seine, to 54 (today's 30) Rue de Chaillot, almost on the corner of the former Avenue Joséphine (now Avenue Marceau). Their third-floor flat there is larger, comprising antechamber, dining room, three rooms with fireplaces, a box-room, sitting room, corridor, toilets and kitchen (A.P., cadastre memorandum books, 1875-1877).



The block of flats in which the Gauguins lived, at 54 (today no. 30) rue de Chaillot.

Monsieur Cornu having died in 1875, Schuffenecker inherits FF 25,000; he goes into partnership with his friend Fontalirant, the inventor of a form of gold-casing; this proves very lucrative (Grossvogel, 1980-1981, p. 20).

That same year, Durand-Ruel holds an Impressionist exhibition in his London gallery; he closed the gallery later that winter (Rewald, 1946; 4th edition, 1973, pp. 311, 600).

During his military service at Lorient, Moret takes lessons from Ernest Corroller, drawing teacher in the Lorient secondary school, who continues advising him till 1883 (Boucher-Sauvage, 1986, p. 90).

Meijer De Haan, afflicted with curvature of the spine, has to give up his course at the Amsterdam Academy of Painting (J.-M. Cusinberche, trilingual catalogue of the exhibition *Gauguin and his Painter Friends in Brittany*, no place of publication, 1993, p. 150).

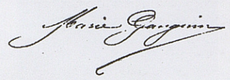
May
Vincent Van Gogh is transferred to the Paris branch of Goupil (Merlhès, 1984, p. 374, note 90).

8 May
Emil Gauguin is baptised at the église de la Rédemption. His godfather is Frits Thaulow, and his godmothers



The painter Frits Thaulow, c. 1878, detail of a photo (Wildenstein Institute Archives).

Elizabeth Möller and Marie Gauguin, then domiciled at 30 Avenue de Friedland (Rédemption parish church, register of baptisms, 1875, volume E, f° 392).

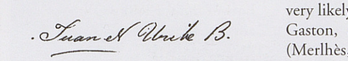


Marie Gauguin's signature, 1875.

28 December
Marie Gauguin, unemployed, marries Juan Nepomuceno Uribe Buenaventura, a rich Colombian merchant born 14 May 1849, in Saint-Cloud. The groom's witnesses are Carlos

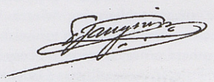


Marie Gauguin and her husband Juan Uribe (from Merlhès, 1984).



Juan Uribe's signature, 1875.

Uribe, unemployed, aged 21 and domiciled at 30 Avenue de Friedland, Paris (perhaps the groom's younger brother?) and Antonio Gutiérrez, merchant aged 22, domiciled at 3 Rue de Hauteville; the bride's witnesses are Paul Gauguin, stockbroker's clerk, and François Arosa, of independent



Paul Gauguin's signature, 1875.

means, aged 90, domiciled at 37 Rue Laffitte. Gustave Arosa was also present (mairie of Saint-Cloud, marriage register, 1875-1876).
The young couple set up house at 84 Avenue d'Iéna, on the 3rd floor of a handsome block of flats, not far from the Gauguins (Merlhès, 1984, p. 327, note 20).

1876

Émile Bernard goes to live with his grandmother Sophie Bodin-Lallement, who runs a large laundry establishment in Lille. Encouraged to draw by a friend, he begins a period of artistic and literary education (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, pp. 4, 6, 8).

April
Vincent Van Gogh is forced to resign his job at Goupil (Merlhès, 1984, p. 374, note 90). After a short stay in England, he returns to Holland (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 90).

Moret is accepted for the Paris École des beaux-arts and enters the studio of Léon Lehmann (and subsequently that of Jean-Paul Laurens), where he very likely makes the acquaintance of Gaston, son of Félix Jobbé-Duval (Merlhès, 1989, p. 75; Boucher-Sauvage, 1986, p. 90; cf. *Chronology*, October 1880).

1 May
Opening of the Salon Officiel; in the vestibule, Puvis de Chavannes shows his planned frescoes for the Panthéon. The Salon jury accepts *In the Forest, Viroflay (31)* by the unknown Gauguin – reviewed by Charles Yriarte (1876, p. 36, cf. *31*, D): 'Monsieur Paul Gauguin […] shows great promise' – but rejects two paintings by Manet.

October
Marie Heegaard, back in Paris with her sister Rita and Rita's children, visits Mette and Ingeborg (Bodelsen, 1961, p. 36). The Thaulows are in



Ingeborg Gad, wife of Frits Thaulow, detail of a photo (Wildenstein Institute Archives).

Paris for the winter, with their daughter Nina (born 30 August 1875 in Norway) and take rooms at 10 Rue Pauquet (now Rue Jean-Giraudoux), very close to the Gauguins' flat.

Around late 1876-early 1877
Gauguin leaves Bertin's, which has, since March 1876, been under the direction of Léon Galichon (Merlhès, 1984, p. 327, note 20, and notule 5), Paul Bertin's former partner: 'for the moment, things aren't going very well for Paul; I don't think he has a very good job, which is worrying for Mette', writes Marie Heegaard shortly before 3 November (Bodelsen, 1961, p. 36).

1876-1883

Sérusier shows himself a brilliant student at the lycée Condorcet, with a particular interest in maths and philosophy (Guicheteau-Boutaric, 1976, p. 160).

Their neighbours are the sculptor Jean-Paul Aubé (1837-1916), and, at no. 3 (now no. 11) the statuary sculptor, Jules-Ernest Bouillot (born in Paris, 3 October 1837), in whose studio Gauguin made his first attempts at moulding and carving sculpture (cf. no. *55*).
According to Rostrup (1956, p. 63), Gauguin now makes the acquaintance of the Danish art critic Karl Madsen (1855-1938) who was staying in Paris 1876-1879 (*Les Peintres de Skagen*, Maison du Danemark, Paris, 23 April-17 May 1980, p. 34).



The Lycée Condorcet, rue Caumartin façade, engraving (from C. Simond: *Paris de 1800 à 1900*, Paris, 1901, vol. III).

1877

1 June
Mette and Paul Gauguin, expecting a second child, move to Vaugirard, to no. 1 impasse Frémin (now cité Falguière) also numbered as 74 Rue des Fourneaux (now Rue Falguière), to a two-storey house comprising carriage gateway, hall, one room with fireplace, main room and kitchen, and, on the first floor, landing, 3 rooms, one with toilet *alla turca*, one with toilet *à l'anglaise*, which they rent for three years from one Boucard (A.P., cadastre memorandum books, 1876, with the description 'Monsieur Gauguin, clerical').



The sculptor Jean-Paul Aubé. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



The sculptor Bouillot's studio, 3 (today no. 11) impasse Frémin.



Karl Madsen, drawing by P. Krøyer, 1877. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

June
Schuffenecker exhibits for the first time at the Salon of 1877 (an architectural drawing) as a student of F. Grellet, and continues to do so regularly until 1881. He is living at 13 Rue Vavin (Salon brochure).

9 February 1874
Death of Michelet.



Jules Michelet, engraving (from C. Simond: *Paris de 1800 à 1900*, Paris, 1901, vol. III).

15 April-15 May
First exhibition of the Impressionist group (thirty-nine artists) in Nadar's studio at 35 boulevard des Capucines. Guillaumin, Pissarro and Cézanne (invited by Pissarro) take part.



Nadar's Studio, 35 boulevard des Capucines, photographed by Nadar. Photo: BNF.

Manet illustrates Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* (in Mallarmé's translation).
Philippe de Chennevières submits his report on a plan for decorating the Panthéon, with commissions suggested for artists as various as Bonnat and Moreau, Millet and Puvis de Chavannes.
Flaubert: *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*.
Gallé builds a glassware-factory in Nancy.
Louis Boileau and Gustave Eiffel build Le Bon Marché department store.

1875

30 January
Birth of the 3rd Republic.

5 February
Ruiz Zorilla is expelled from Spain. He seeks refuge in Bayonne, then Paris, where he leads the revolutionary movement. But the protests of the Spanish authorities lead the French government to refuse him residence, so he moves to Geneva.

22 February
Death of Camille Corot.

3 March
Triumphant première of the 'opéra-comique' *Carmen* by Georges Bizet.

2 June
Death of Bizet.
Death of Millet, Barye, Carpeaux.
Charles Garnier completes the Paris Opéra.
Three aeronauts make a balloon ascent in the *Zénith*.



Charles Garnier, photographed by Nadar, c. 1877. Photo: BNF.

1876

2-10 October
First Workers' Congress in Paris.

April
The Durand-Ruel gallery, 11 rue Peletier, hosts the second Impressionist exhibition, in which Pissarro takes part.

8 June
Death of Georges Sand.



Georges Sand, photographed by Nadar, c. 1864. Photo: BNF.

13 August
Opening of the first Bayreuth Festival with Wagner's *The Rhine Gold*.



Wagner's Bayreuth Festival Theatre. Photo: Harlingue-Viollet.

Mallarmé's *L'Après-midi d'un faune* illustrated by Manet.
Abadie begins construction of the Sacré-Coeur in Montmartre.
Invention of the four-stroke engine by Beau de Rochas and Otto (Germany).
Invention of the telephone by Bell (United States).

1877

4 May
Gambetta's speech against clericalism.

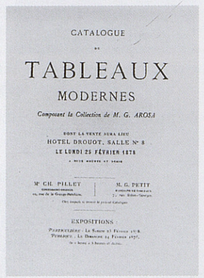
24 December
'In this impasse, which is a bit of a den of thieves' (*Avant et après*, p. 138), Aline Gauguin is born. Her birth is declared 'in the presence of Jules Bouillot, statuary sculptor aged 40, residing at the same address, and Charles Orsolini, sculptor aged 27 years, domiciled at 152 Rue de Rennes' (A.P., birth register of the 15th arrondissement, 1877, no. 2590).

Vincent Van Gogh trains for the priesthood (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 90).

1878

The Thaulows move to 42 Rue d'Orsel in Montmartre (salon brochures, 1878 and 1879), where they spend two winters before passing June 1879-December 1882 in Oslo.

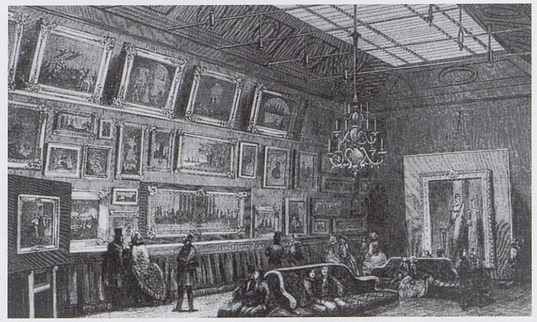
25 February
For financial reasons, Gustave Arosa sells his collection of paintings. The catalogue contains a preface by Philippe Burty, and is illustrated with plates (using the Arosa collotype procedure), which Gauguin made frequent use of in his own work.


CATALOGUE
TABLEAUX
MODERNES
Composant la Collection de M. G. AROSA
HOTEL DROUOT, SALLE N° 8
LE LUNDI 25 FÉVRIER 1878
M. CH. PILLET
M. G. PETIT
EXPOSITIONS

Title page of the catalogue of the Gustave Arosa sale, 25 February 1878, at the Hôtel Drouot. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

The Bernard family moves to Paris, to Boulevard Voltaire (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, pp. 14-15); having left Lille, Émile enters the École des arts décoratifs, from which he is in due course expelled (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 16).

Georges Seurat (1859-1891), having read *Le Grammaire des arts du dessin* (1867) by Charles Blanc, studies the scientific treatises of Chevreul on the laws governing colour (Rewald, 1946, 4th ed. 1973, p. 601).


The Painting Exhibition Room of the Goupil Gallery around 1860, print. Photo: BNF.

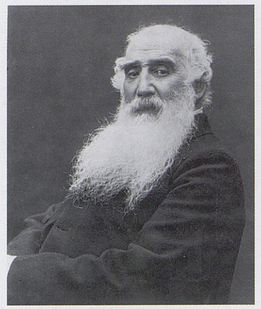
March
Theo comes to Paris to work on the preparation of the Goupil stand at the Exposition universelle (Stolwijk, 1999, p. 30).

Having failed to obtain a post as a priest, Vincent Van Gogh moves to the Belgian coal-mining area, the Borinage, in order to teach the Bible to the poor, spending two years among the miners (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 90).

Late October
Pissarro rents a *pied-à-terre* in Montmartre at 18 Rue des Trois-Frères (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 35).

1879

The first letter from Gauguin to Pissarro is dated 3 April (Merlhès 6).


Camille Pissarro c. 1880.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

The 'Dear Monsieur Pissarro' of Gauguin's letters and the very different style of his paintings of 1879 seem to suggest that only then did he become close to Pissarro (cf. *Introduction* to 1879-1883). Arosa may have introduced them earlier, but Gauguin did not frequent Pissarro till after the latter had come to Paris, in late 1878 (Merlhès, 1984, p. 331, note 21). 'Camille Pissarro was a compatriot of Mme Gauguin and was welcomed into Gauguin's house as a friend' (Rotonchamp, 1906; republished 1925, p. 21).

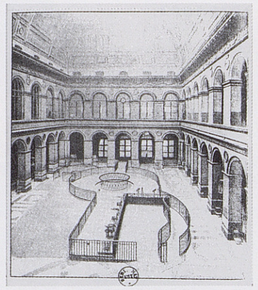
10 April-11 May
Fourth Impressionist exhibition, held at 28 Avenue de l'Opéra. Gauguin's name appears in the catalogue only as the owner of three works by Pissarro. Pissarro and Degas at the last moment invite him to take part, and he shows a sculpture (Duranty, 1879, pp. 127-128). Renoir, Cézanne and Sisley were not represented, as they preferred to attempt entry into the Salon.

10 May
Birth of Clovis Henri, Gauguin's third child, at 74 Rue des Fourneaux. The


Café de la Nouvelle-Athènes, place Pigalle, old postcard. Photo: BNF.

birth is declared 'in the presence of Jacques Bouillot, aged 75, of the same address, and Émile Lenglet, sculptor, aged thirty-[*illegible*], domiciled at 112 Rue de Vanves (A.P., birth register of the 15th arrondissement, 1879, no. 959).

At 'the Bourse, […] Gauguin gambles and wins – his good fortune seems invariable. […] Over the past few months, to the stupefaction of Schuffenecker, Gauguin has made forty thousand gold francs' (Perruchot, 1961, p. 73).


The Stockbrokers' Central Enclosure at the Bourse de Paris, engraving. Photo: Harlingue-Viollet.

'At one point, Gauguin, who was earning more than enough to live on, was full of pride. He came to the Bourse in a brougham which waited outside till the market closed'. (Marcel Mirtil, son of the banker Eugène Mirtil, to Cogniat, 13 October 1955, Wildenstein Institute Archives).

July
A letter from this period (Merlhès 8) tells us that Gauguin is frequenting the café de la Nouvelle-Athènes, place Pigalle, where the 'Manet gang' had been meeting since around 1875.

We know that he is now working at 21 Rue Le Peletier as a book keeper for André Bourdon, *banquier* (that is, outside broker), who has just succeeded his brother-in-law, Gustave Caperon. It is just possible that he was employed before that by G. Caperon-Tanaÿs and E. Thomas, partners in banking, at 54 Rue de la Victoire (Merlhès, 1984, pp. 330, note 20, p. 332, note 26). At all events, he is described in the electoral rolls of the years 1878, 1879, 1880 as 'stock broker's clerk' (A.P., electoral rolls, 15th arrondissement).
Several letters now show that Gauguin was making efforts on behalf of his Impressionist friends to sell paintings; he was – and probably had been for some time – building up a fine collection of his own, which included several works by Guillaumin (the heart of his collection, cf. Merlhès 1984, p. 337, note 32) Pissarro and Manet, along with works by Boudin, Jongkind, Degas, Cézanne, Renoir, Sisley, Cassatt, Forain, John L. Brown, and Daumier (Bodelsen, 1970). Pola Gauguin (1938, p. 62) informs us that he bought FF 15,000 worth of paintings in one go, following Pissarro's advice. 'I saw Claude Monets being sold around 1875 for FF 30 and I myself bought a Renoir for FF 30. Moreover, I had a collection of all the Impressionists, which I bought very cheaply. It is in Denmark in the home of my brother-in-law, the famous Brandès, who will not sell it any price. And there are twelve Cézannes among that lot', wrote Gauguin in January 1900 (Malingue CLXXIII, to Vollard). This is no doubt the period Pola Gauguin describes thus (1938, p. 44): 'he likes to have beautiful things around him, he likes to "set up house" […]. He buys oriental carpets and china, especially Rouen faience with its cheerful decoration in rich colours'.

Summer
Bernard, on holiday in Lille, has an operation (letter to his parents, not dated, PSU).

Around 20-21 September
Gauguin's first documented visit to Pissarro in his house at 18bis Rue de l'Hermitage, Pontoise; he lodges with a woman whose name we do not know (Merlhès 11).
Gauguin now frequents the shop of Julien Tanguy (1825-1894), manufacturer and seller of fine paints,


Père Tanguy, painting by Vincent Van Gogh, 1887. Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.

established at 14 Rue Clauzel since 1873 (deported as a Communard, he was freed after two years thanks to the intervention of Jobbé-Duval – cf. *Chronology*, October 1880 – according to Bernard: 'Julien Tanguy…', *Mercure de France*, 16 December 1908, p. 603); Tanguy is already the supplier and friend of a number of Impressionists, who leave works on deposit with him to be displayed in his shop-window (Merlhès, 1984, p. 335, note 31).
Gauguin tells Pissarro that he will have some paintings exhibited alongside works by Monet, Sisley and Renoir in the dispatch room of


50. PONTOISE — Panorama de l'Hermitage - Chapelle du Sacré-Cœur (E.L.D.)

The Hermitage quarter, Pontoise, old postcard.

April 1877
Third Impressionist exhibition at 6 rue Le Peletier.
At the Salon, Rodin's *The Age of Bronze* provokes a scandal.


Auguste Rodin, photographed by Carjat, 1879. Paris, Musée Rodin.

Foundation of the Concerts Colonne.
Saint-Saëns: *Samson and Delilah*.
Victor Hugo: *La Légende des siècles*, new series.
Creation of the Musée des Arts décoratifs.

31 December
Courbet dies in Switzerland.
Thomas Edison and Charles Cros invent the phonograph.


Charles Cros (poet and inventor), photographed by Nadar. Photo: BNF.

1878

June
Creation of the Union générale, a bank intended to 'group Catholic capital together and transform it into a powerful lever' of power, with the 'autograph blessing of the Holy Father', in order to counter the Jewish and Protestant banks that had hitherto predominated (Perruchot, 1961, p. 70).
In France, the phylloxera crisis affects viticulture.

Davioud completes the first palais du Trocadéro.

1 May
Opening of the Exposition universelle in Paris.
Patent for reproduction of photos in books and magazines taken out by the Frenchma,n Charles-Guillaume Peti,t and the American, Frédéric Eugène Ikes.
Edison invents the incandescent light bulb.

1879

Stock-market boom 1879-1881 (Merlhès, 1984, p. 341).

4 February
Jules Ferry becomes Minister of Education. The republicans begin to establish a policy of secularisation of the State and of social life, and a far-reaching reform of education, particularly primary education, for which 'compulsory, free, and secular' are now the three governing principles.

20 October
The French Socialist Workers' Congress in Marseilles adopts a Marxist program.

13 January


Honoré Daumier, character-sketch by Étienne Carjat (from C. Simond: *Paris de 1800 à 1900*, Paris, 1901, vol. III).

Death of Honoré Daumier.
Charpentier founds the magazine *La Vie moderne*, which organises regular exhibitions.


The Palais du Facteur Cheval, Hauterives (Drôme). Photo: Roger-Viollet.

Le Facteur [Postman] Cheval begins his Palais Idéal in the Drôme (completed in 1912).
Pasteur discovers the principle of vaccination.
Edison invents the microphone.

L'Événement at 2 passage de l'Opéra (21 September 1879 number, p. 1; Merlhès 11).

That year, Marie Heegaard marries Bjørn Stephensen after a long engagement. As a wedding present (following family tradition, according to Bodelsen), Mette and Paul together embroider a little cross-stitch tapestry after a drawing by Paul (Bodelsen, 1961, p. 36 and fig. 5).



Cross-stitch tapestry made by Mette and Paul Gauguin and given as a wedding gift to Marie Heegaard (from Bodelsen, 1961).

November
Theo Van Gogh is transferred definitively to the oldest branch of Goupil & Cie, in Paris (Stolwijk, 1999, p. 30).

Gauguin probably meets Guillaumin around 1879, either through Pissarro or at the café de la Nouvelle-Athènes.
Guillaumin was then working at the Paris highways services (night soil department) three nights a week in order to keep body and soul together, while painting the banks of the Seine



Self-Portrait by Armand Guillaumin, 1878. Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum.

during the day; he had a studio at 13 quai d'Anjou (Gray, 1997, p. 12). Guillaumin, born in Paris of a family from Moulins, self-taught but well-read and very independent of mind, showed early signs of artistic talent, and returned to Paris at sixteen. For some ten years, he was one of the painters closest to Gauguin. Alas, his correspondence has been destroyed (Merlhès, 1984, pp. 336-337, note 32).

Schuffenecker now lives at 36 Rue Vavin (Salon brochure).

Around 1879
Delavallée enrols at the Sorbonne (he had obtained a first prize in the general competitive exam in philosophy) and at the École nationale des beaux-arts, where he studies with Luc-Olivier Merson and Carolus-Duran (*Gauguin et l'École de Pont-Aven*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, 13 January-5 March 1989, p. 56). There he meets his future wife, Gabrielle Moreau, who is also a painter.

Around 1879-1880
The Bernard children showing signs of weak health, the family moves to Nogent-sur-Marne (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 19).

1880

1-30 April
Fifth Impressionist exhibition, held in a mezzanine at 10 Rue des Pyramides. Dissension within the Impressionist group was growing. Monet joined Renoir and Sisley in wanting to submit work to the Salon. He told *La Vie moderne*: 'I'm an Impressionist, but these days I see my colleagues only very rarely […]. Our little Church has become a common or garden school that opens its doors to any old dauber' (É. Taboureux: 'Claude Monet', 12 June 1880, p. 380). Was he referring to Gauguin, or to Degas' policy? While refusing those who submitted work for the Salon, Degas was recruiting mediocrities, to the great dismay of Caillebotte, who insisted on quality (Varnedoe, 1988, pp. 6-7). Gauguin took part, showing a marble bust and seven Pontoise and Vaugirard landscapes, which elicited little interest: 'a dilution of the already uncertain works of Pissarro', noted J.-K. Huysmans (*L'Art moderne*, 1883; republ. 1908, p. 262).
Was it at this exhibition that his meeting with Manet occurred? It is recounted in *Avant et après* (p. 73): 'He once told me, having seen a picture of mine (early on…) that it was jolly good, and I replied out of respect for the master: "Oh, I'm just a Sunday painter". At the time I was a stockbroker's clerk […]. – "No, No!" he replied. "The only Sunday painters are the ones who paint badly". That warmed my heart'. In 1880, Gauguin acquired a Manet pastel, *Knitting* for FF 500 (Rouart-Wildenstein, 1975, vol. II, pastel no. 20: cf. no. *64*).
It may also have been during this exhibition that Gauguin swapped a work with Mary Cassatt, exchanging his *Snow at Vaugirard* for her pastel *Young Lady with Fan*, since both works were exhibited (album Briant f° 5; Huyghe sketchbook, p. 228; cf. no. *57*).



Self-Portrait, watercolour by Mary Cassatt, c. 1880. Washington D.C., National Portrait Gallery.

Schuffenecker, whose portrait of a woman has been accepted by the Salon, defines himself as a student of Paul Baudry. He is living at 55 Boulevard Edgar-Quinet (Salon brochure) with his mother.



Louise Schuffenecker (née Lançon), drawing by Émile Schuffenecker (from Porro, 1992).

Bourdon's having closed in 1880 (it no longer appears in the 1881 Bottin), Gauguin is working 'in good conditions' at the financial agency A. Thomereau (purchase and sale of shares in insurance companies, the latter having proliferated since 1870) at 93 Rue de Richelieu, entrance at 1 Rue d'Amboise (Merlhès 12, 18).

Spring
Laval, then studying with Bonnat, is accepted by the Salon at nineteen years of age; he has a studio at 13 Avenue Frochot – very near the Nouvelle-Athènes – which he kept for two or three years (Merlhès, 1984, p. 452, note 219).

Moret is already exhibiting Breton landscapes at the Salon. From this year on, the Paris addresses cited in the Salon brochures indicate that he was dividing his time between Paris and Brittany (Boucher-Sauvage, 1986, p. 96).

June
Bernard makes his first communion in Paris (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 21).

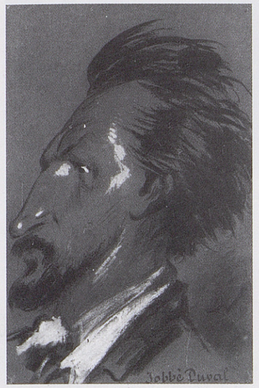
Autumn
Vincent Van Gogh takes up painting full-time (Stolwyk, 1999, p. 33).

October
'I've found a splendid studio opportunity with a three-room apartment. For the sum of 700 francs, there is a studio six metres by five, two big rooms and one smaller one, all exquisitely clean'. (Merlhès 13, to Pissarro, 16 August). Probably in early autumn, the Gauguins moved to 8 Rue Carcel – opposite the church of Saint-Lambert – a house which also has three bedrooms and a kitchen looking out onto the garden; the studio with large modern windows is on the second floor. They must have been subletting



Gauguin's house at 8 rue Carcel.

from Félix Jobbé-Duval (whose twenty-year lease dated back to 18 July 1863). Jobbé-Duval (1821-1889) was from Finistère. A painter regularly accepted by the Salon, he was, like Gauguin, a republican (till



Félix Jobbé-Duval, caricature by Nadar. Photo: BNF.

1886, he sat on the municipal council). He moved to the nearby 17 Rue de Dantzig (Merlhès, 1984, pp. 417-418, note 184; A.P., cadastre memorandum books, 1862; cf. no. *69*, inset).
During 1880-1881, a Danish woman, Mathilde Minona Marie 'Mimi' Schwartzkopf (1851-1932) lodged with the Gauguins at Rue Carcel, having come to study painting in Paris with E. Barrias and G. Courtois. She subsequently studied with Pietro Krohn, and in 1892 married the Danish novelist Karl Larsen (*Weilbachs Kunstnerleksikon*, 1952, vol. III, pp. 183-184).
Around the same period, the Gauguins frequented many Scandinavians, such as Charlotte Flensborg, pianist and music teacher in Paris (catalogue *Post-Impressionism*, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, 1993, p. 60) and Mlle Paterson (Malingue, 1987, p. 51).

Around 1880, perhaps because she was again pregnant, Mette entrusted Emil, now six, to a friend who lived in Denmark, Mme Karen Lehmann, born Wiehe (Bodelsen, quoting Rostrup, 1970, p. 601). Some years later, Emil's studies were paid for by Count Frederik Moltke, whose wife, Magda Estrup (they married in 1881), had earlier been



Frederik Moltke and his wife Magda, née Estrup. Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

Mette's student and friend (cf. *Chronology*, May 1885 and no. *21*).

21 October
Schuffenecker marries his first cousin, Louise Lançon (daughter of the late Amélie Augustine Monnet, the sister of Schuffenecker's mother). Louise is nine years younger than Émile; they live at 55 Boulevard Edgar-Quinet. The marriage certificate describes Schuffenecker as a painter by profession, so he had already, by then, given up his financial career (A.P., marriage register of the 5th arrondissement, 1880, no. 699).

Autumn
The Bernard family returns to Paris, to Boulevard Voltaire, and Bernard begins boarding at the Sainte-Barbe-des-Champs school in Fontenay-aux-Roses (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 22).



The painter Émile Jourdan sporting a Breton waistcoat. Photo: Musée de Pont-Aven.

1880

6 July
14 July becomes the national holiday.

11 July
Amnesty for Communards.
The Tahiti archipelago, under French protectorate since 1842, is annexed only in 1880, and becomes the centre of the French establishment in Polynesia; on 29 June, King Pomaré V makes over his powers to France.

23 September
Jules Ferry becomes Prime Minister.

21 December
Law on the foundation of high schools for young women, and creation of the École normale supérieure for young women in Sèvres.

Manet holds a solo exhibition on the premises of *La Vie Moderne*.
Rodin works on the *Doors of Hell* (completed in 1885) and finishes the plaster of the *Thinker*.
Maupassant: *Boule de Suif*.
The Naturalists gather at Zola's soirées in Médan.
Pierre Loti: *Rarahu* (which became *Le Mariage de Loti* in 1882).
Publication of the first volume of the *Lettres d'Eugène Delacroix* by Philippe Burty.

9 May
Death of Flaubert.

June
Monet exhibits at *La Vie Moderne*.

King Pomaré V (centre), photo, 29 June 1880. Photo: Collection Viollet.



10 October
Death of Offenbach.



Jacques Offenbach, photographed by Nadar, c. 1875. Photo: BNF.



The Palace of King Pomaré V, 29 June 1880, Day of the Donation of Tahiti to France, engraving by Vuillier. Photo: Collection Viollet.

1880-1886
Émile Jourdan studies at the École des beaux-arts de Paris in the studios of Bouguereau and Robert-Fleury, and in the *académie* Julian, where he sports a richly-embroidered Breton waistcoat (Tuarze, 1973, p. 101). He completed his Beaux-Arts course in March 1886 (*Jourdan*, 27 June-30 September 1987, p. 20).

1881

At a date unknown, but before the April exhibition, Gauguin exchanges works with Degas, swapping his own painting *On a Chair (63)* for Degas' pastel, *Ballet Dancer Adjusting Her Shoe*, no. 699 in the Lemoisne catalogue (Huyghe sketchbook, p. 228; handwritten inventory of the Degas collection, Brame archives).



Edgar Degas in 1885, photographed by Barnes. Photo: BNF.

Gauguin begins to buy from Durand-Ruel (over the course of the year: a Manet seascape, two Renoirs, a work by John Lewis Brown, two Jongkind seascapes), while occasionally operating as his agent (Merlhès, 1984, pp. 353-354, note 59): 'he says that he has in the past been responsible for Durand-Ruel selling 35 thousands worth of Impressionists' (Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, 496, 12 June 1888).

January-February
Theo Van Gogh is appointed manager of the Goupil branch at 19 Boulevard Montmartre and thereafter pays a part of the allowance given to Vincent by his parents (Stolwijk, 1999, p. 33).

February
Thanks to his friend Feder, Durand-Ruel starts buying Impressionist works again (Venturi, 1939, vol. I, p. 57) and backs the organisation of the 6th Impressionist exhibition (Pissarro-Venturi, 1939, vol. I, pp. 46-47).

16 March
Durand-Ruel's first purchase from Gauguin: two canvases for FF 350 each and a third for FF 800 (Durand-Ruel, stock nos 912, 913, 914: Huyghe sketchbook, p. 228).

2 April-1 May
The 6th Impressionist exhibition, at the Old England house, 35 Boulevard



Joris-Karl Huysmans, pastel by Jean-Louis Forain, c. 1878. Paris, Musée d'Orsay, dépôt du Musée national du château de Versailles. Photo: RMN.

des Capucines, marks the final break-up of the group. Degas, supported by Pissarro, succeeds in expelling the Salon-exhibitors and discouraging Caillebotte, who, having given up the organisation of the exhibition, is replaced by Durand-Ruel (Varnedoe, 1988, p. 7). Gauguin shows eight paintings and two sculptures. No. 36 of the exhibition, *Woman Sewing (64)*, makes a big splash and is extolled by J.-K. Huysmans for 'so vehemently realistic a note', one which reveals 'the undeniable temperament of a modern painter' (*L'Art moderne*, 1883; republished 1908, pp. 262-267). When the article eventually appeared, Gauguin remarked that Huysmans had understood nothing about the modernity specific to Impressionist art (Merlhès 36). Paul Mantz notes 'the Independents' more or less triumphal entry into an art that they had not hitherto thought of rejuvenating, that of sculpture'. He is struck by the freedom and audacity of Gauguin's *Woman Singing*, a carved medallion (no. 38 in the exhibition), but announces that 'the true, the only sculptor, […] is Monsieur Degas' (Mantz, 1883, p. 3). Degas's sculpture was a wax statuette, *Little Dancing Girl at Fourteen.*) On 27 April, no. 30 in the exhibition is sold to Monsieur Baroux (*Vaugirard Church by Night, 69*).



The quai du Pothuis at Pontoise, level with Pissarro's house, old postcard.

12 April
Birth of Jean René, Gauguin's fourth child, at 8 Rue Carcel. The birth is declared in the presence of Félix Armand Jobbé-Duval, aged 59, and Dominique Pallier, aged 25, locksmith (A.P., birth register of the 15th arrondissement, 1881, no. 808).
The house in Rue Carcel is visited by many friends, including Degas, who was invited to 'a little ceremony at […] Gauguin's' on an unknown date in late 1880 or the first half of 1881 (Merlhès, 1989, p. 13, note 1).

Schuffenecker, having been accepted by the Salon for the last time, defines himself as a student of Paul Baudry and Carolus-Duran. He is living at 55 Boulevard Edgar-Quinet.



The painter Carolus-Duran, photographed by Nadar, 1886. Photo: BNF.

5 May-shortly after 15 October
Cézanne stays at 31 quai de Pothuis in Pontoise, where he often sees Pissarro (Rewald, 1937; letters LXXIX and LXXXV; cf. *Introduction* to 1879-1883).



Self-Portrait, painting by Paul Cézanne c. 1879-1882. Berne, Kunstmuseum.

Around July
Camille Pissarro moves to 85 quai du Pothuis, Pontoise, now 15 quai Eugène-Turpin (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 37).

Around July
Gauguin has already met Cézanne (Merlhès, 1984, pp. 350-351, note 56, and Merlhès 16). Was there a misunderstanding between them, as certain people have suggested? Gauguin undoubtedly had almost infinite admiration for Cézanne, and possessed a dozen of his works (Malingue CLXXIII).
A drawing by Manzana Pissarro, then aged ten, records his retrospective view of a picnic with Pissarro, Guillaumin, Gauguin, Cézanne and his wife; the painters had brought their easels (cf. no. *85*).
No doubt around this time, Gauguin meets the landscape artist Victor Vignon (1847-1909), with whom he arranges an exchange of works (Huyghe sketchbook, p. 224).

Bernard, on holiday with his grandmother, copies Franz Hals' *Sorceress* in the Lille museum (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 24).
In 1881, according to the census of the *commune* of Clohars-Carnoët, Henry Moret, now, at twenty-five, a man of independent means, is living in Le Pouldu at the home of the bar-owner Goulven. In his old age, Goulven still possessed a portrait of his mother by Moret. The description *paterfamilias* in the census is incorrect, since Moret remained a bachelor until 1910 (Jaworska, 1971, p. 245, note 140). He exhibits at the Salon (Boucher-Sauvage, 1986, p. 96).

Alphonse Portier (1841-1902), 'a little picture dealer, a man of taste and conviction, full of delicate scruples' (G. Lecomte: *Guillaumin*, 1926, p. 32) Libaude, later known as the author and critic Louis Lormel (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 27).

2 October
Birth of Jeanne Schuffenecker (1881-1979) (A.P., birth register of the 14th arrondissement, 1881, no. 3853).

17 October
Durand-Ruel buys a painting from Gauguin for FF 200 (Durand-Ruel stock no. 1933).

14 December
Gauguin tells Pissarro that he is resigning from the Impressionist exhibitions in protest at Degas' policy; Degas is absolutely determined to include Raffaëlli: 'every year one Impressionist goes to make way for non-entities and Beaux-Arts students' (Merlhès 20).

December 1881-September 1883
With Theo's financial support, Vincent Van Gogh studies art at The Hague (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 90).



Alphonse Portier, c. 1900. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

begins to look after the interests of the Indépendants (Merlhès, 1984, p. 347, note 48, and Merlhès 16).

Delavallée discovers Pont-Aven thanks to a painter friend who is the cousin of Hersart de Villemarqué, the lord of the manoir du Plessis, above the bois d'Amour; he spends the following summers there, at first alone and then with his wife (Le Paul, 1983, p. 235).

Autumn 1881 (?)
Bernard publishes a little journal, *L'Artisan*, with his friend Louis

1882

Durand-Ruel: 'The collapse of the Union Générale, which had such calamitous effects throughout France, dealt me a terrible blow. The ruin of Monsieur Feder, its Director, who had devoted his entire fortune to trying to save the company, obliged me to reimburse the large sums he had advanced to me, and indeed out of gratitude for services rendered I gave him [financial] assistance for a very long time […]. When he died […], he still owed me a considerable sum, several hundred

1881

Digging of Lesseps' Panama Canal begins.

12 May
The Bardo Treaty instituting a French protectorate in Tunisia. Gambetta encourages Ferry toward colonial expansion, so that France can maintain its status alongside its neighbours, whereas the right and the radicals oppose this policy, which they consider inimical to France's humanitarian tradition.

10-14 June
Ruiz Zorilla holds a congress of Spanish revolutionaries in Biarritz.



Puvis de Chavannes: *Poor Fisherman*, 1881. Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

14 November 1881-26 January 1882
Gambetta is Prime Minister.

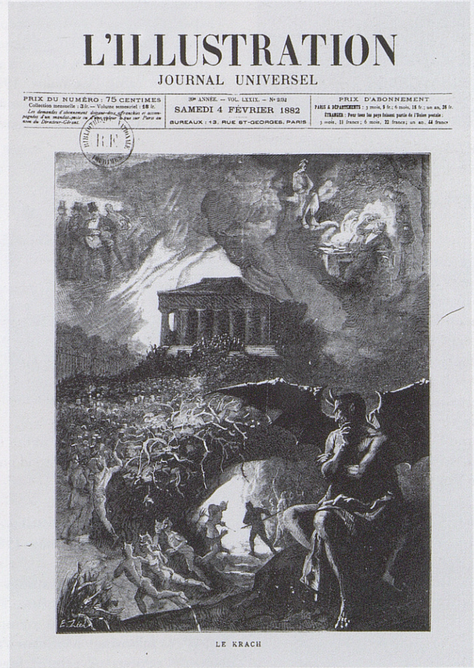
2 May-30 June
At the Salon, *Poor Fisherman* by Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898) causes a great stir.

May
Sisley, followed by Redon, exhibits at *La Vie Moderne*.

1 August
Opening of the Electricity exhibition. Foundation of the Concerts Lamoureux. Verlaine: *Sagesse*.
In the early 1880s, the Pre-Raphaelite movement, with Millais and Burne-Jones, is beginning to attain some repute in France. Sédille builds second Printemps department store, after the first has burnt down.
In Paris, the *grands boulevards* receive electric street-lighting.

1882

19 January
The collapse of the Union générale des banques - the inspiration for Zola's *L'Argent* - became both cause and symbol of the slump in stocks and shares, which had been artificially inflated by unbridled speculation.



The Crash of the Union générale, drawing by Ziem for *L'Illustration*, 4 February 1882. Photo: BNF.

thousand francs. It took me many years to recover from this further knock. […] I owned little but [the works of] my new friends, and these were on the index almost everywhere and considered wholly worthless […]. In this way, I endured four or five mortifying years' (Venturi, 1939, vol. II, pp. 213-214).

Michel Manzi (Naples 1849-France 1915), former Captain of the Italian Military Geographical Institute, begins working for Goupil. Manzi has a passion: the development of a new kind of typogravure (*Portraits inédits par Michel Manzi*, Musée Goupil, Bordeaux, 30 May-30 August 1997, pp. 9-10).



Michel Manzi: *Caricatural Self-Portrait* dressed as Italian army officer, with sword and giant quill, late 1870, pen and ink and watercolour.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

In the early 1880s, Granchi-Taylor gives up finance for his first vocation, painting, perhaps under the influence of the stock-market crash (cf. no. *205*).

Anquetin enters the free *atelier* of Léon Bonnat, where Toulouse-Lautrec becomes his best friend.



Self-Portrait by Louis Anquetin 1894 (from Rewald, 1956).



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, c. 1883, detail of a photo.
Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec.

1 March-2 April
7th Impressionist exhibition at 251 Rue Saint-Honoré, in a room adjoining the Panorama des cuirassiers du Reichshoffen (Merlhès, 1984, p. 355, note 63, and Merlhès 18). Durand-Ruel – who, because of the economic crisis, is trying to sell off his stock – expels Degas and contrives a compromise between Sisley, Renoir, Monet and the Pissarro, Gauguin and Guillaumin camp (Varnedoe, 1988, pp. 7-8). However, as a latecomer and a friend of the 'socialist' Pissarro,



The 7th Impressionist Exhibition, sketch by PAF [Jules Renard] in *Le Charivari*, 19 March 1882.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Gauguin still faces the hostility of Monet and Renoir (Merlhès, 1984, pp. 360, 362-3, note 70).
Gauguin shows eleven paintings or pastels and a wooden sculpture. The tone of the many reviews is exemplified by the following: 'Monsieur Paul Gauguin exhibits oil-painted hieroglyphics in white frames' (Hepp, 1882, p. 1). Berthe Morisot notes: 'It seems that Gauguin and I have been chosen as the clowns' (*Correspondance de Berthe Morisot*, réunie et présentée par D. Rouart, Paris, 1950, p. 109).

May-June
'I should gladly have come to see you at Pontoise, but I'm rather attached to my Sundays, I've so little spare time […]. I can't resign myself to spending my entire life as an amateur painter working in finance; I've got it into my head that I shall be a painter. As soon as the horizon seems a little clearer and I can earn my living that way, I'll go right ahead and do it' (Merlhès 23, to Pissarro).
'This year I'm really up to my neck in it from the money point of view; business is dead in the water I'm not earning anything but have to keep on spending'. (Merlhès 24).

Moret exhibits at the Salon.

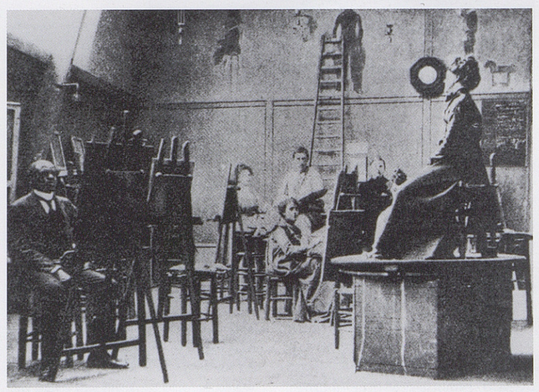
Around the middle of the year
Ernest Chaplet (1835-1909) sets up a little factory at 153 Rue Blomet, Vaugirard (very close to Rue Carcel) producing stoneware in various colours for the Haviland firm (Merlhès, 1984, p. 427, note 196).

Schuffenecker is rejected by the Salon in 1882. Since 1869, he has been defining himself as a student of academic painters, whose homes were, incidentally, close to his own in Montparnasse (cf. Salon brochures, 1877-1881). This failure was perhaps a factor in his decision to enrol at the 'student academy' opened in 1881 by 'Filippo Colarossi, painter and sculptor' at 10 Rue de la Grande-Chaumière, also in Montparnasse. There Colarossi, surely no more avant-garde than Schuffenecker's previous masters, rented one floor in the courtyard of a recently constructed building comprising four studios, which he finally came to own in 1884 (cadastre memorandum books, 1876, art. 413-414, box 502). Perruchot (1961, p. 59, note 1) supposes Colarossi to have taken over from the *académie* Suisse, 4 quai des Orfèvres, which had become the *académie* Crébassol, and was still in existence in 1876 (cadastre memorandum books, 1862, 1876, box 823), however there is no suggestion of this in the cadastre documents (cf. *Chronology*, 22 November 1873). And Colarossi's regular presence at the Salon (sculpture section) between 1882 and 1889, and the advertisement placed in the weekly *Moniteur des arts* without interruption from 15 April till the end of June 1881 tend to suggest that the *académie* Colarossi was, in 1881, entirely new.

Summer
Bernard is on holiday in Dunkirk, painting in the museum and outdoors (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, pp. 10-11).

July
Durand-Ruel organises a little Impressionist exhibition in London (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 37).

September
The Gauguins have been planning a holiday near Paris, staying in the home of one Mme Auxerre, who has left for the seaside: did they go (Merlhès 25)?



One of the studios of the *académie* Colarossi, c. 1901. Photo: Clive Holland.

September
After the closure of the *atelier* Bonnat, Anquetin and Toulouse-Lautrec attend the *atelier libre* of Fernand Cormon at



The painter 'Cormon' (Fernand-Anne Piestre).
Photo: collection Viollet.



The Flight of Cain, painting by Cormon. 1880.
Paris, Musée d'Orsay. Photo: ND-Viollet.

10 Boulevard de Clichy (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 228).

Autumn (?)
Bernard enters the *quatrième* class at the collège Sainte-Barbe in Paris, where he is inspired with a great love of poetry by the poet Deltel (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, pp. 28-29).
Maurice Denis enters the lycée Condorcet, where he studies classical literature.



The Courtyard of the Collège Sainte-Barbe, drawing by Émile Bernard, 1882.
Bremen, Kunsthalle Bremen.

October-December
'Business is at a very low ebb and the future isn't looking too great; […] My mind is completely taken up with dreams and observing nature and the desire to work and little by little I just forget about business or at least how to do business. As for giving up painting even for a minute – Never! […] It's time I found a solution, the strength and vitality that allow me to work at the moment will disappear or be worn down' (Merlhès 28).

Pissarro and Gauguin meet from time to time on Sundays, and Gauguin advises his former master about sculpture (Merlhès 28), presenting him with a pear-wood carving that he has dedicated to him: Gray 7 (Merlhès 29).
Émile Armand Bertaux (born 24 December 1848; cf. no. *96*) buys two '*Pontoise Landscapes*' from Gauguin for FF 1,000 (Huyghe sketchbook, p. 228). Bertaux was working as a cashier in the outsider brokerage of Gaston Lafuite at 32 Avenue de l'Opéra. During the years 1882-1885, he was a very close friend, becoming, under Gauguin's influence, a partisan not merely of modern art but of Spanish republicanism, to which Calzado had recruited Gauguin (Merlhès 1984, p. 370, note 82; Merlhès, 1989, p. 16).

1 December
Pissarro moves to Osny (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 37).

December
The Thaulow family (which now includes a second daughter, Else, born 31 August 1880) returns to Paris for the winter, living at 136 Avenue de Villiers in the 17th arrondissement (cf. no. *109*). There the Norwegian painter Erik Werenskiold (1855-1938) encountered Mette – 'she has married a French painter […] who is at the same time a

30 January 1882
Bankruptcy of the Union générale: the Director, Feder, is arrested. A severe and widespread economic slump follows, lasting till 1886 (Merlhès, 1984, p. 368, note 73).



The Arrest of Director Feder at the Offices of the Union Générale, engraving.
Photo: BNF.

Savorgnan de Brazza concludes agreements with the native chieftains of the Congo.



Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza (explorer), photographed by Nadar. Photo: BNF.

28 March
Law on compulsory primary education.

18 May
Foundation of the Ligue des patriotes, whose goal is to conserve the spirit of revenge against Germany.

31 December
Death of Gambetta.

12 April
Opening of the Musée ethnographique at the Trocadéro.

May
Courbet retrospective at the École nationale des beaux-arts.
Redon, exhibiting for the second time (on the premises of *Le Gaulois*), is eulogized by Huysmans.

28 May
Opening of the Musée de Sculpture comparée at the Trocadéro.

1 July
Manet receives the Légion d'honneur.

13 July
Inauguration of Ballu and Deperthes' Hôtel de ville (Paris).

26 July
World première of Wagner's *Parsifal* in Bayreuth.

19 December
Opening of the first exhibition of Société internationale des Peintres et Sculpteurs (exhibiting at the Salon) at the Georges Petit gallery, 8 rue de Sèze. 'The time it takes to make one's name doesn't seem so bad when one sees how feeble these famous names are' (Merlhès 31). In the 1880s, Georges Petit becomes the main rival to Durand-Ruel and Theo Van Gogh in the market for Impressionists (Merlhès, 1984, p. 371, note 86).
Fauré: *Requiem*.
Foundation of the Union centrale des arts décoratifs.
Eiffel: Garabit Viaduct.
Edison: First electric power-station (United States).

Amerindian collections of the Musée ethnographique du Trocadéro in *L'Illustration*, 15 April, 1882, p. 241.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.





Self-Portrait, drawing by Erik Werenskiold, 1877. Photo: Grøndahl Dreyer.

business man' (unpublished letter of 13 December 1882, Nasjonal Biblioteket d'Oslo); this is the first reference to Gauguin by a Scandinavian painter.

1882-1884

Bernard does many drawings from nature and copies old masters; he visits the Salon and the Panthéon (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, pp. 30-32).
The health of his sister Madeleine takes a turn for the worse in Paris, and she is sent to a boarding-school at Saint-Mandé on the edge of the bois de Vincennes; but her condition is aggravated by her sadness, and the Bernards decide to leave Paris (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 35).

1883

This is perhaps the period when the Danish painter Christian Skredsvig



Self-Portrait, watercolour by Christian Skredsvig, 1885. Photo: Grøndahl Dreyer.

(1854-1924), 3rd class medal-winner at the Salon of 1881, boasting of the superiority of his master Bonnat in the mainly Scandinavian company at the Thaulows, hears Gauguin reply: 'I can tell you, I saw just one painting at the Salon, and that was Manet's'. Thaulow's painting leaves Gauguin completely indifferent (Pola Gauguin, 1938, pp. 72-73). Gauguin later described it in an article as official, insipid and ignorant ('Exposition de la Libre Esthétique', *Essais d'art libre*, February 1894, p. 32).

Early in the year

Durand-Ruel has redecorated a small mezzanine at 9 Boulevard de la Madeleine for the future Impressionist exhibition, which eventually took the form of a succession of solo shows (Merlhès, 1984, p. 372, note 88). Gauguin deplored this: 'We were of interest because we formed a phalanx of talented painters with the convictions of a movement who were protesting against mercenary painting. […] the public […] will say that you are like the others and prostitute yourself to the dealer', he told Pissarro, who favoured Durand-Ruel's idea (Merlhès 32).
Over the course of this year, in an attempt to set his business back on an even keel, Durand-Ruel organised Impressionist exhibitions in London (Merlhès 35), Rotterdam, and Berlin (Rewald 1946; 4th ed. 1973, p. 604).

6 February

On his way to Montmartre on Shrove Tuesday, Gauguin visits Manet who lives in Rue Saint-Pétersbourg (letter to Pissarro, 9 February, Rewald archives).
'My brother-in-law Thaulow has just got divorced and I've had to attend to all that and am still in the midst of all these wranglings' (*ibidem*).

Sunday 11 March

Gauguin joins Pissarro in Osny where he paints two winter studies (Merlhès XV).

Spring

Frits Thaulow leaves Paris.

14 April

Death of Gustave Arosa: Gauguin who, according to Merlhès (1984, p. 331, note 20), had rather parted ways with his guardian around 1880, attended neither the funeral on the 16th nor the memorial mass on the 19th (Merlhès, 1984, p. 376, note 95 and Merlhès 33).

20 April

In London, Durand-Ruel organises an exhibition of the Société des Impressionistes, which in fact brings together a considerable diversity of styles while omitting certain members of the group; Gauguin does not approve (Merlhès 35).

From this period on, Gauguin's letters frequently mention Claude Antoine Charles Favre (1847-1900), whom he may have met in 1871, when they



Claude Antoine Charles Favre, painting by Gauguin, 1877 (*43*). Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

were both in the French navy – hence the nickname *Marsouin* [porpoise/marine]. Gauguin painted his portrait in 1877, and he remained a close friend till 1889 (cf. no. *43*).

30 April

Manet dies at the age of fifty.

Thursday 3 May

Gauguin paints at Chaville rather than attend Manet's funeral, where the cortège numbers several hundred, but he takes part in the group purchase of a wreath (Merlhès 35).

May

Pissarro exhibition at Durand-Ruel, for which Gauguin lends four paintings, which are returned on 7 June (Durand-Ruel Archives, 1880-1884 day book).

Laval exhibits for the second and last time at the Salon as a student of Bonnat and Cormon, giving his address as 23 Rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin (Merlhès, 1984, p. 453, note 219).

Moret exhibits at the Salon.

16 June

From Osny, Pissarro writes to his son Lucien: 'Gauguin has been with us since yesterday, he's come to spend his holiday here and do some studies, he told me that there was some prospect of business in the offing, doing models for Impressionist tapestries […], it's obviously a branch of industrial art which might be worth a lot of money' (Merlhès XVII). Pissarro was expecting 'Gauguin's friend Monsieur Cellot, who specialises in that' (Merlhès XVIII). The plan came to nothing.
'I'm glad to know Gauguin the terrible is with you he'd have really suffered if he couldn't have worked under your guidance during his holidays despite his brusque manners he's a good companion there's a man you can count on when times are hard', Guillaumin tells Pissarro (Merlhès XIX, 30 June).
It was **perhaps this summer** that Gauguin was hoping, thanks to Murer's intervention (see below), to rent rooms for Mette and the children from Dr. Gachet at Auvers-sur-Oise, but the plan fell through (Merlhès, 1984, p. 385, note 112).



Viosne Bridge (Osny, Oise), painting by Camille Pissarro, 1883. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

With the failure of the solo Impressionist shows, Durand-Ruel is on the brink of bankruptcy. (D. Wildenstein: *Catalogue raisonné de Claude Monet*, Lausanne-Paris, 1979, vol. II, p. 30).

5 July

'I'm going to Paris today with Gauguin who has finished his holidays', Pissarro writes (Bailly-Herzberg 166).

8 July

Pissarro gives up his *pied-à-terre* at Rue des Trois-Frères (Bailly-Herzberg 163).

At Tanguy's, Gauguin buys two Cézanne pictures for FF 120 – Mme Latouche (cf. *Chronology*, 1873, Late July-August) considers this madness – and on 22 July he visits Guillaumin at Damiette in the Chevreuse valley (Merlhès 38).

13 August

Mette's 'boarder' leaves. This may have been her sister Ingeborg (Hvidt, 1987, p. 168), who had recently separated from her husband (cf. no. *109*).
Aline has had to have her head shaved, as whole areas of her hair were falling out.
'I do nothing all day whereas I could be using the time to study my art. At the moment I'm deeply interested in Spanish affairs, in which I'm taking a slightly active role […]. At all events, if this revolution is successful, or if it goes on seriously for even a month, it's not ruled that I might get a little money out of it in the future' (Merlhès 39, cf. following).
A little watercolour signed 'Cerbère **18 August** P.G.' attests to his visiting the Spanish border on a secret mis-



View of Cerbère with railway bridge, from V. Vattier d'Ambroyse: *Côtes languedociennes. Du Cap Cerbère à Marseille*. Paris, 1888. Photo: BNF.

sion entrusted to him via Adolphe Calzado (according to Merlhès 1984, p. 388, note 119). Gauguin enjoyed dramatising this for his friends' benefit: he entered Spain on a locomotive in a sack of coal, and brought back Zorrilla in a haycart (Schuffenecker: *Notes sur Gauguin*, unpublished manuscript quoted in Kunstler, 1937, p. 7; De Monfreid, November 1903, p. 384; cf. no. *158*).

October

'When I think that in January I shall have another child and no job' (Merlhès 40); 'I have no prospect of a job, everywhere they say the same thing, business is going badly and they need to let people go rather than take anyone on. So from now on I'm going to set about pestering dealers seriously'. Gauguin was hoping to find an outlet for his paintings in Georges Petit, and was also wondering about Alphonse Legrand, a former bookkeeper at Durand-Ruel's gallery (Merlhès, 1984, p. 390, note 125). 'Love of my art's occupying too large a slice of my mind for me to be a good business employee […] and on the other hand, I've too large a family and a wife who's completely incapable when it comes to hardship. So I can't just plunge into painting full time without knowing I have at least half what I need' (Merlhès 41, 11 October).
As Marcel Mirtil tell us, Gauguin was twice over a victim of the crisis: 'Subsequently he began speculating on his own account and lost money. This was the situation when he was forced to leave finance' (Mirtil to Raymond Cogniat). Gauguin was now 'fed up with the stock market' (Schuffenecker: *Notes sur Gauguin*, quoted in Perruchot, 1961, p. 89) and gave himself up to painting without more ado.

Before 11 October

Pissarro arrives in Rouen and stays at the hotel du Dauphin et d'Espagne, which belongs to his friend Eugène Meunier, known as 'Murer'(1846-1906), a pâtissier, restaurateur and novelist. Murer had frequented the Impressionists since the 1870s, thanks to his friend Guillaumin (they had met at the primary school in Moulins), and built up a remarkable collection with 'the flair of a money-lender' (Merlhès, 1984, pp. 389-390, note 124).



Eugène Meunier, known as Murer, painting by Camille Pissarro, 1878 (Pissarro-Venturi 469). Springfield (Massachusetts), Museum of Fine Arts (James Philip Gray Collection).

October

The prudent Schuffenecker has provided for his own future by passing the competitive exam of the Brevet d'enseignement des arts et du dessin dans les écoles communales de Paris [Primary school teaching certificate]. He is appointed to the boys' school at 20 Rue des Fourneaux.
At the *académie* Colarossi, Schuffenecker meets Georges-Daniel de Monfreid and Louis Brouillon. Under the name Jean de Rotonchamp, Brouillon wrote Gauguin's biography (Loize

1883

21 February

Ferry is again Prime Minister. He has three goals: colonial expansion, industrial and commercial development, and a secular State and education.



Jules Ferry. Photo: Albert Harlingue.

25-26 June

Louise Michel is sentenced to six years in prison and ten under police supervision for having incited strikers to loot bakeries during the **9 March** demonstration. Still in exile, Ruiz Zorrilla decrees an



The 9 March Demonstration, looting of a Parisian bakery by Louise Michel, engraving in *L'Illustration*, 17 March 1883. Photo: BNF.

insurrection for **5 August**, with the agreement of the Director of the Military Republican Association, a secret organisation that he has just founded in Paris, and which has infiltrated the Spanish army. Information about a postponement (to 10 August) having failed to reach Badajoz, a threefold military uprising starts on 5 August and is crushed, frustrating the plot; uncertainty lasts throughout August, but finally the *coup d'état* does not take place.



Manuel Ruiz Zorilla. Photo: BNF.

23 August

Protectorate imposed in Annam and Tonkin.

February

Boudin exhibition at the Durand-Ruel gallery.

13 February

Death of Wagner in Venice.

March

Monet exhibition at the Durand-Ruel gallery.

April

Renoir exhibition at the Durand-Ruel gallery.
Exhibition of Japanese art at the Georges Petit gallery, accompanying the appearance of Louis Gonse's *L'Art japonais* in two volumes (Jirat-Wasiutynski, 1975, republ. 1993, p. 134, note 2).



Cover page of Louis Gonse: *L'Art japonais*, 1883. Photo: BNF.

May

J.-K. Huysmans: *L'Art moderne* (cf. *Chronology*, 2 April-1 May 1881).

June

Sisley exhibition at Durand-Ruel.
Chabrier: *España*, played at the Concerts Amoureux.
Tissandier (France): first dirigible.
De Dion-Bouton: steam-powered road-going car.

662, De Rotonchamp to De Monfreid's widow, 19 May 1938; cf. *Chronology*, 1887).

Thursday 1 November
Gauguin joins Pissarro in Rouen: 'he's come to see me here, he says, to examine the place from a practical and artistic point of view, and he naively adds that the Rouen people are very rich and it might be easy to persuade them to buy when the time came. – Really, Gauguin quite worries me, he's appallingly mercantile himself, or at least his preoccupations are. […] his family is used to luxury […] but that'll be a big handicap' (Merlhès XX); 'he's expecting to actually settle in Rouen… It's a big decision, he's moving away from Paris to devote himself to painting and expects to win a place in art by working very, very hard. We went all over Rouen looking for a suitable house I'm to settle the business today. Gauguin […] is counting on his friends and acquaintances to help him win favour with buyers, if you could be of any assistance to him with Legrand in particular and friends in general' (Merlhès XXI) Pissarro writes to Murer, who lives next to Legrand at Les Yvelines (cf. above). Around 1881, Murer had indeed moved to Auvers-sur-Oise (Les Yvelines) and acquired the Du Dauphin et d'Espagne Hotel in Rouen (Merlhès, 1984, p. 389, note 124).



The Du Dauphin et d'Espagne Hotel after its conversion to a theatre in 1906. Collection of the Bibliothèque municipale de Rouen.
Photo: Didier Tragin/Catherine Lancien.

'Gauguin […] is taking Rouen by storm and expects to give it a year's trial, he's half given up finance for art' (Merlhès XXII, Pissarro to his son Lucien).

28 November
After a period of intense work at Rouen, Pissarro returns to Osny (Bailly-Herzberg 193).

6 December
At 8 Rue Carcel, Paul Rollon ('Pola'), Gauguin's fifth child, is born. Gauguin defines himself as *artiste peintre* on the birth certificate (A.P., birth register of the 15th arrondissement, 1883, no. 2966).

29 December
Gauguin's last purchase from Durand-Ruel; the debt of FF 518 remained outstanding for years (Merlhès, 1984, pp. 354-355, note 59).

December 1883-November 1885
Having returned to live with his family at Nuenen, Van Gogh produces the most important works of his Dutch period (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 90).

1884



View, Holland, painting by Édouard Manet (Rouart-Wildenstein 185, former Gauguin collection). Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), Philadelphia Museum of Art.

January
A big Manet retrospective at the École des beaux-arts (116 oils, 31 pastels) to which Gauguin lends a painting – *View of Holland* (Rouart-Wildenstein, 1975, seascape no. 185) – as do Duret, Zola, Mallarmé, Nadar and Fantin-Latour. Gauguin bitterly regrets not being able to see the exhibition (Merlhès 43).

4 January
The Gauguin family leaves Vaugirard 'to go and exploit the Scandinavians of Rouen' (Merlhès XXIV), moving to 5 impasse Malherne (now impasse



The Gauguins' house at 5 impasse Malherne, Rouen.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Gauguin), off the Rue du Nord in the Beauvoisine suburb of north-east Rouen. The house, an old one, was rented from one Jules Lenoir; it comprised three floors, with two wings added around 1880, all at the bottom of a little rectangular garden.
'My wife is unbearable here finds everything bad and our future prospects depressing. I have to admit they are; […] I have enough to live on for 6 months at the most. As for business, I can't rely on it at all so I absolutely have to make ends meet by painting. On which point my sister and many others have of course got my wife all worked up and so I haven't a pennyworth of talent etc. […] I'm counting on you to see Portier and persuade him to keep me alive for a while' (Merlhès 43, to Pissarro).

4 January
In Brussels, the cercle des XX [des Vingt] is founded in opposition to the Salon jury. Its secretary is the lawyer Octave Maus (1856-1919), founder and editor of *L'Art moderne*



Octave Maus, painting by Théo van Rysselberghe, 1885. Brussels, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique.

(M. Octave-Maus: *Trente années de lutte pour l'art, 1884-1914*, Brussels, 1926, p. 17).

2 February-March
First exhibition of les XX at the palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles (M. Octave-Maus, 1926, p. 18); les XX thus takes up the baton from the French Impressionist exhibitions, which had eventually brought together the whole spectrum of the avant-garde.



Poster for the first exhibition of Les Vingt, Brussels.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



René Valadon. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Adolphe Goupil and his son retire in favour of Léon Boussod and his son-in-law and partner René Valadon (Merlhès, 1984, p. 375, note 90).

4 April
Pissarro leaves Osny for Éragny-sur-Epte, near Gisors (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 38).

7 April
As he had planned in January, Gauguin comes to Paris to 'place what [he has] done', staying with Claude Antoine Favre, the *Marsouin*, who lives in a little two-room mansard flat on the 5th floor of 11 Rue Darcet in Les Batignolles (Merlhès 43, 45).
'My series of paintings was deemed good by Durand-Ruel but you never know what to make of what he says'. On 9 April, Gauguin deposits with



Today's 11 rue Darcet, Paris.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Durand-Ruel the Manet seascape and seven of his Rouen paintings, removing them on 10 July without having achieved any sales (Durand-Ruel, stock book, nos. 4274 to 4280). The exception is no. 4277, handed over on the day of its deposit to Bertaux's boss, the financier Lafuite (cf. no. *116*, inset).
Gauguin is relying on Bertaux and his friends to find buyers for him (Merlhès 46).

***Towards the second half* of April**
Gauguin makes a fortnight-long trip on behalf of the Spanish republicans, who want to exploit the frauds affecting the election to the Cortes and declare a general uprising. He leaves, with Bertaux for the south of France; on 26 April, in Montpellier, Ruiz Zorrilla hands them FF 20,000 for the purchase of a boat that is to take him to Spain when the moment comes for him to lead the revolution. But on 29 April, the insurgents are crushed. The news reaches Montpellier on 1 May. Zorrilla is stunned (Merlhès, 1989, p. 16, does not specify his sources).



The Musée Fabre at Montpellier.
Photo: ND-Viollet.

No doubt it was during this stay that Gauguin first visited the Musée Fabre, which had, since 1868, held the Alfred Bruyas collection. There he copied a Delacroix painting, *Aline, la*

***mulâtresse* (*Avant et après*, pp. 183-184; cf. no. *158*).**

May
Gauguin intends signing a financial agreement with Portier, and wants to bring Pissarro into this (Merlhès 47). 'In three months, I shan't have a penny to live on and my pictures are not about to sell […] Remind Portier to look after the sale of my Manet; I need money' (Merlhès 48, to Pissarro).

May
Durand-Ruel is in severe financial difficulties: 'If he can't find money within a month he's quite simply finished' (Merlhès 47). But he experiences an unexpected recovery that same year, thanks to 'an amicable liquidation', as he later described it to Fénéon: 'Fortunately, I found a friend in every one of my creditors. I owed millions. It took me ten years, from 1884-1894, to pay them off' (Fénéon: 'Les grands collectionneurs. Paul Durand-Ruel', *Bulletin de la Vie artistique*, 15 April 1920, p. 271).

15 May-1 July
The recently founded group of Artistes indépendants organises an exhibition without jury or prizes on the site of the old palace on Rue des Tuileries. It contains more than 400 artists, including Guillaumin, Schuffenecker, Redon, etc.; Seurat shows *Bathers, Asnières*, which the Salon has just refused.

June
The poor financial management of the group results in a scission that gives rise to the Société des Artistes indépendants.
Schuffenecker, who has invariably been refused entry to the Impressionist exhibitions, is one of the co-founders, with Signac, Seurat and Redon.

Summer
The Bernard family has moved to a house between Asnières and Courbevoie (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 36). Émile's father wants to send him back to school, while he himself wants to become a painter (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 38).

July-August
Exhibition organised by Murer in his Rouen hotel of a few paintings from his own collection, including several Pissarros and Sisleys, one or more Guillaumins, and a Gauguin accepted on deposit (Alfred Isaacson to Lucien Pissarro, 6 September 1884, Ashmolean Museum, cited in Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 309): 'The Murer exhibition isn't too bad, apart from the frames […] overall, esteem for us is growing all the time' (Merlhès 49). The white-framed landscape, *Snow, Rue Carcel II (98)* is subsequently submitted, on Murer's advice, to the jury of the Rouen municipal Salon (12 August-30 September), which rejects it (Merlhès 50).

9 July
Gauguin is in Paris for the marriage of his friend Bertaux. The following day, he takes back the Rouen paintings deposited with Durand-Ruel in April (Merlhès, 1984, p. 396, note 139, and Merlhès 49), perhaps to deposit them with other dealers.
The Gauguin family is visited in Rouen by Uncle Zizi and a series of photos of Mette with the children is taken before their departure.



Isidore Gauguin ('Uncle Zizi'), painting by Gauguin, 1884 (*156*). Dallas (Texas), Dallas Museum of Art (The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection).

Late July
Taking Aline and Pola with her, Mette embarks for a two-month stay in Denmark; the steamer, plying the route between Rouen and Esbjerg, on the west coast of Jutland, was probably ordered and commissioned by Sophus Philipsen, the husband of one of Mette's cousins and twin brother of the Danish painter Theodor Philipsen (cf. unpublished letter from Rostrup to Cooper, 4 November 1977; Rostrup, 1960, p. 159; Merlhès 122), and Mette

1884

30 March
Dissolution of the Cortes in Spain.

27 April
Cortes elections in Spain.

27 July
Divorce re-established at the instigation of the radical Naquet. Maupassant takes up the subject with brio in his column 'Le divorce et le théâtre' (*Le Figaro*, 12 June 1884).



Naquet and his Divorce Law Before the Senate, caricature by Trock in *La Caricature*, 28 June 1884. Photo: BNF.
['This time, the box is empty'. 'Alas, Doctor, I decided to take my medicine']

4-5 February
The sale of the Manet studio at the hôtel Drouot; prices are driven up by friends, admirers and speculators (A. Wolff: 'De l'École des beaux-arts à l'école de Batignolles', *Le Figaro*, 7 February 1884, p. 1).

15 March-15 April
Exhibition of 153 works by Raffaëlli in avenue de l'Opéra. Among them, two plaster sculptures which elicit Gauguin's mockery when he visits in April: 'See the



Félicien Champsaur, engraving. Photo: BNF.

sculpture, what a dentist'. He is depressed by the mediocrity of the critic Champsaur who praises Raffaëlli to the skies and dismisses in banal fashion the great talents of Impressionism ('Chroniques parisiennes. Silhouettes impressionnistes', *L'Événement*, 22 March 1884, pp. 1-2; Merlhès 45).



Aline, Gauguin's daughter, detail of a photo by Tourtin, Rouen.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Clovis, Gauguin's son, detail of a photo by Tourtin, Rouen.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Jean, Gauguin's son, detail of a photo by Grundtvig, Copenhagen.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Pola, Gauguin's son, with his mother Mette, detail of a photo by Tourtin, Rouen, reproduced at *154*.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

travels free. 'I must admit that in the midst of the difficulties that surround me, my wife is a considerable encumbrance; the less there is […] the more she requires and the less she stints herself […]; I'm selling my life assurance […] and with that 1500 I'll try to get through 3 months' (Merlhès 50).
Gauguin remains behind with Christine the maid, Clovis and Jean (Merlhès 50). Mette, in addition to giving French lessons, begins translating *War and Peace*, which is to appear by instalments in the daily paper *Politiken*, whose founder, Edvard Brandes, is an associate of her sister Ingeborg (Hvidt, 1987, pp. 246-248; cf. no. *154*).



The offices of the daily *Politiken*, on the corner of Integade and Østergade, Copenhagen (from Hvidt, 1987).

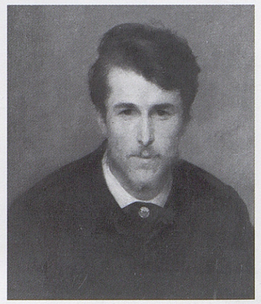
The Société de Saint-Luc is founded to provide free education on contemporary works of art. Its foundation is probably owed to Durand-Ruel, who is seeking a much broader clientele. The Société is housed in the former Durand-Ruel galleries in Rue Le Peletier (A. Dalligny: 'La Société de Saint-Luc', *Le Journal des arts*, 11 July 1884, p. 1).

August
Bankruptcy of Murer's hotel in Rouen.

At an unspecified date, Gauguin makes a trip to La Bouille, a pretty village on the left bank of an incised meander of the Seine; it lies 18 km upstream of Rouen, and there is a daily steamer service. He goes there in the company of Monsieur and Madame Carl August Manthey. Carl is a Norwegian timber merchant, his wife a Swede resident in Rouen (cf. no. *143*).

Late September-October
The Autumn Salon takes place in Christiania (Oslo) in Norway (the catalogue gives no more precise date). Frits Thaulow is exhibiting there, and Gauguin is able to take part thanks to his brother-in-law. He hopes to find a Scandinavian clientele: 'My consignment comprises eight canvases […]all of them done here [in Rouen]: the wildest ones. I wanted to make a striking show there rather than anything half-hearted' (Merlhès 53). Three are exhibited. Frits writes to say that his 'paintings have of course greatly astonished but also fired the enthusiasm of many painters' (Merlhès 55).
At the same time, Mette's return is marked by important decisions: 'We have decided that my wife will move to Denmark and give French lessons. I think she'll find it easy to earn money; true, it's a little ignoble my wife being the one to earn our keep, but my conscience is clear. I've worked long enough on everyone else's behalf, and if I can't at the moment earn my living, the real imbecile is the public' (Merlhès 53). Much later, in a letter to Schuffenecker of 12 June 1896, Gauguin described the Rouen period: 'life had become unbearable because of my wife's character. By the 15th of the month she hadn't a penny because she was secretly paying off debts. I wrote to her mother for a divorce. My wife went to Denmark for a few days. Throughout that time, Madame's IOUs were arriving in the post. Christine [the maid] confessed that it was the same every month. Showdown on Madame's return; she didn't want to divorce, tears, forgiveness' (Malingue, 1987, p. 58).

October
Gauguin has deposited a Renoir and a Monet (given to him as commission by Durand-Ruel) for sale with Chercuitte, a wood-gilder whose shop was in Rue de Douai (Durand-Ruel to Pissarro, 23 October 1884, in Bailly-Herzberg, p. 316, note 1). Was it around this time that Bertaux encouraged Gauguin to devote himself entirely to painting, promising to support him for a year (Merlhès 78), something he was unable to do because of the crash of the Stock Market?
Short of money, Gauguin decides to leave for Denmark, where he will be the Scandinavian representative of Dillies and Cie, a manufacturer of imperishable water-proof canvases and covers, manufactured according to a recently patented procedure. The company was based in Roubaix (32 Rue des Filatures). It was thanks to his friend Favre, recently recruited to Dillies, that Gauguin was offered this post (cf. no. *43*). Gauguin appoints Favre his chargé d'affaires, and stores his paintings at Favre's flat (now 17 Rue Perdonnet, near the gare du Nord, according to the *Almanach du commerce*, 1885, or 19 Rue Perdonnet according to Favre's business cards). There Gauguin sends new works.
Gauguin asks Pissarro to do him the honour of choosing a recent picture in his memory, adding, 'I beg you – do not consider me buried' as he will still be able to paint in Denmark.
Gauguin becomes passionately interested in graphology. His principal source was undoubtedly J.-H Michon: *Système de graphologie. L'art de connaître les hommes d'après leur écriture*, Paris, 1875, 6th edition in 1880). He asks Pissarro to send him letters from persons known and unknown to practise on, and sends him a personal graphological study (Merlhès 54, 55).
Gauguin's son Jean is convalescing after having had typhoid for twenty days (Merlhès 54).



Eugène Boch, painting by Henri Rachou, 1884. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



The *atelier* Cormon c. 1885, with Toulouse-Lautrec, Anquetin, Tampier, Bernard, and Granchi-Taylor. Photo: BNF.

Around October or mid-November
On the recommendation of Michel de Wylie, a Russian painter and neighbour of the Bernard family at Asnières, Émile aged sixteen enters the *atelier* Cormon, 104 Boulevard de Clichy (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, pp. 39-40, letter from his sister Madeleine of 26 September 1884, opposite p. 41), where he no doubt meets Laval (cf. *Chronology*, 1886). There he makes friends with Anquetin, then Toulouse Lautrec, Eugène Boch (1855-1941) and one Tampier, who shows him the Impressionists and takes him to the Louvre (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 41).

3 or 4 November
Having borrowed FF 420 for the purchase of a dress from the Schuffeneckers, who have organised a farewell soirée on 27 October in Paris, Mette takes her children and furniture and puts Rouen and France behind her. Ten days later, she arrives in Copenhagen and temporarily establishes herself and family at her mother's flat, in a block known as 'Lille Rosenborg', at 29 Frederiksberg Allé (Merlhès XXV).



Lille Rosenborg, 29 Frederiksberg Allé, Copenhagen.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

6 November
Having acquired, by competitive exam, the right to teach drawing in secondary and higher education,



The Lycée Michelet, Vanves, postcard.
Photo: Xavier Bernard.

Schuffenecker is appointed teacher at the lycée Michelet in Vanves (departmental order signed by the minister, in the collection of the Musée départemental Maurice Denis 'Le Prieuré'). He makes friends with one of his colleagues, the painter Louis Roy (1862-1907), who later became a friend of Gauguin's.

16 November
Gauguin is in Christiania to meet the pharmacist Hermann Thaulow (1853-1890). The younger brother of Frits, Hermann had married Pylle, Mette's sister, in 1877; he offers to be sole agent and salesman for Dillies' products in Norway. Paul joins Mette in Copenhagen some days later.

Before the end of November
The family moves to 105 Gammel Kongevej (Merlhès 56), in a recently built-up area of Copenhagen, around the corner from Mrs Gad's flat. There they have a seven-room apartment on the ground floor with separate kitchen, giving onto the street, at a rent of 400 crowns per semester, i.e. about FF 1,100 (census report of 1 February 1885, Danish national archives, published in Rostrup, 1956, p. 66, note 10; the report describes Gauguin as a trade representative).



Gammel Kongevej in Copenhagen.
Copenhagen, Bymuseum.

14 December
Birth of Paul Schuffenecker (1884-1918), Gauguin's godson (Birth register of the 14th arrondissement, 1884, no. 5649).
His jewellery business is flourishing, and Schuffenecker is able to build up a collection of some 120 works by Van Gogh, Gauguin, Redon, Cézanne, Filiger, and Émile Bernard.

December-20 January
First exhibition of the Société des Artistes Indépendants, in which Schuffenecker, Guillaumin, Redon and others take part; Gauguin had refused to do so (Merlhès 65). The co-founders of the new Société, Georges Seurat and Paul Signac (1863-1935) meet at the exhibition (Rewald, 1946, 4th ed. 1973, p. 605).

Gauguin has not had time to paint because of the move, but thinks that motifs are not lacking in Copenhagen, which he finds 'wonderfully picturesque'; he is astonished by the bad aesthetic taste exhibited by the Danes, and by their morals, which seem to him both too free and too prudish (Merlhès 57).
Mette finds a maid and gives many French lessons at a reasonable rate, which reassures Gauguin. Still fascinated by graphology, he finds in the handwriting no less than in the drawing of Cézanne the 'essentially mystic nature of the Orient' (Merlhès 57, 65).

From 1884
Manzi becomes Director of the photographic studios of the Goupil company at Asnières; in 1884, the development of a typographic system of

May 1884
Foundation of *La Revue indépendante* by Chevrier and Fénéon.
Foundation of the Alliance française.
Massenet: *Manon*.
Huysmans: *À rebours*.



Jules Massenet, photographed by Nadar.
Photo: BNF.

Péladan: *Le Vice suprême*.



Joséphin Péladant. Photo: BNF.

Dalou: *Portrait of Monsieur le professeur Charcot*.

colour photogravure prepares a rapid expansion in Goupil's publication of books and magazines (*Portraits inédits de Michel Manzi*, Musée Goupil, Bordeaux, 30 May-30 August 1997, p. 10).

At some point unknown, but which **it seems plausible to place in 1884** (the years 1885-1888 being too eventful), Gauguin 'travels to Saint-Quentin just to see the works of [Quentin de] La Tour all together, they're not easy to see at the Louvre'. These words are from his letter to Fontainas of August 1899 (Malingue CLXXII), where he describes the trip as having taken place 'some dozen years ago'.

1885

January

'Ah, my dear Pissarro, what a horrible mess I've made of things. No money and no way of earning any with this business within the next 5-6 months. As to painting, not even FF 10 – I daren't think about the future'. He starts learning Danish to facilitate the conduct of business (Merlhès 62).



Molasses, drawing by Gauguin, pen and ink on Dillies headed paper, Copenhagen, 1885. Private collection. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Delighted to receive some etchings from his friend, he tells Pissarro about his visit to Count Moltke, patron of his son Emil. Moltke has inherited a prestigious collection of seventeenth century Nordic art, which is, in Gauguin's opinion, in striking contrast with the aesthetic mediocrity of contemporary painters and art-lovers (Merlhès 61; *Avant et après*, p. 146). 'Sometimes I think I've gone mad yet the more I think about it in my bed the more I think I'm right – […] sensation. Everything's in that word. […] I'm more tormented by art than ever and I'm not distracted from it by either my money torments or business inquiries' (Merlhès 65, to Schuffenecker, 14 January).

'Some dismiss me as an Impressionist, others turn their backs on me; apart from you and Guillaumin there's no one for me – […] I'm so alone here […]. My wife […] you know she has her family which means that I'm a cipher and she's like all women: if you don't succeed you're less than nothing' (Merlhès 68, to Pissarro).

At Cormon's *atelier*, Louis Anquetin, at twenty-four, passes for the most gifted painter, and, according to Toulouse-Lautrec, the man who might take over from Cormon (Merlhès, 1989, p. 76); his friendship with the Symbolist writer Édouard Dujardin proves a lasting one (cf. *Chronology*, 1872, c. 22 December; Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 228).



Édouard Dujardin, woodcut by Félix Vallotton (from Rewald, 1956).

Sérusier enters the *académie* Julian (Guicheteau-Boutaric, 1976, p. 160), where he becomes 'student-in-charge' of the 'little *ateliers*' Lefebvre and



Paul Sérusier. Photo: Musée de Pont-Aven.

Boulanger at 48 Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Denis (cf. M. Denis in Chassé, 1955, p. 126; *The Julian Academy, Paris, 1868-1939*, Shepherd Gallery, New York, March-June 1989, p. 2). Sérusier already knows Latin and now takes up Orientalism, studying Arabic and Hebrew, and becomes a devotee of theosophy (cf. M. Denis, in P. Sérusier: *ABC de la peinture*, 1942, pp. 40, 41, 45).

February

A 21-year old servant, Louise Jensine Jensen, now lives with the Gauguins. Aline has gone to Norway (census report of 1 February 1885, in Rostrup, 1956, p. 66, note 10) to live with Pylle, Mette's sister (Merlhès



Pauline – 'Pylle' – Thaulow, Mette's sister, detail of a photo reproduced at *22* (from Beaute, 1988).

101); according to Pola Gauguin (in Malingue, 1959, p. 32), she was educated there till the age of fourteen in a girls' school whose headmistress was an aunt of Mette's.

Around this time

Schuffenecker has moved to the recently built estate at 29 Rue Boulard, where his friend, the painter Fernand



The little central lane of the housing estate at 29 rue Boulard. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Quignon, lives (cf. birth certificate of Paul Schuffenecker). There he has a little house at the bottom of a tiny garden; his studio occupies the living room (Merlhès 75; Rotonchamp, 1906, republ. 1925, p. 41: cf. *Introduction* to Paris 1887-1888).

'I devoutly hope that you will make progress in intransigence, it's the only way to save yourself, that and extremity', Gauguin tells him in March (Merlhès 75).



The Schuffenecker family in the garden, rue Boulard. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

March

The Gauguins have till now lived 'wretchedly' on the FF 1,300 from a Manet Gauguin has sold (it was entrusted the previous year to Portier, who has just sold it to Alexander Cassatt, cf. Merlhès, 1984, p. 406, note 157, and Merlhès 48), along with the FF 60 a month earned by Mette (Merlhès 75).

Spring exhibition at Charlottenborg (dates not specified by K. Madsen in 'Kunstudstillingen ved Charlottenborg', *Politiken*, 26 April 1885, p. 1).

On **13 March**, Gauguin submits the repeat *Tree-Lined Road, Rouen*, which the jury rejects on **26 March** (cf.



Theodor Philipsen, *drawing by Julius Paulsen, 1885 Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Kobberstiksamling.*

Rohde, 1962, no page nos.); however, the painting became one of the vectors of Impressionism in Scandinavia thanks to the interest of Theodor Philipsen (1840-1920) – to whom Gauguin presented the work – and Karl Madsen ('Th. Philipsen', *Af Dagens Krønike*, November 1889, in Rohde, 1962; cf. no. *163*).

23-25 April

The Gauguin family moves to a more modest apartment on the 3rd floor of 51 Nørregade, in the centre of Copenhagen (Merlhès 75, 77); Gauguin took refuge in a little room with a skylight, since the living room was reserved for Mette's French lessons, given to future diplomats, the cream of Danish nobility (Pola Gauguin, 1938, p. 82).



The block in which the Gauguins lived, at 51 Nørregade, Copenhagen. Copenhagen, Bymuseum.

Having had to pay for the right to represent Dillies' products (Merlhès 59), Gauguin's sustained efforts result in a single derisory order (Merlhès 77).

'Despite that, I am more passionate than ever about the artistic struggle. I shall be marked out here, known to everyone in Copenhagen, and for friends I have the young painters and for enemies the old fossils'. (Merlhès 75).

According to the painter Ludvig Find (1941, p. 2), at some point unknown, Rudolf Bertelsen, a painter and childhood friend of Mette's, visited her: 'he had a violent quarrel with her husband, who was a rather crackpot French painter. Bertelsen had argued in favour of Godfred Christensen, and Gauguin in favour of Gauguin. The affair didn't end too badly, though, since Gauguin made Bertelsen a present of a little sketch, which he still possesses' (Cf. no. *91*).



Rudolf Bertelsen. Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

May

A rumour caused by Gauguin's impiety and spread by 'some Protestant bigots' came close to wrecking the family's precarious finances: 'Countess Moltke who was paying for my son Emil's boarding school stopped just like that for religious reasons, you know, no argument possible – Many French lessons stopped coming for the same reason etc… I've just about had my fill of it and I'm thinking of giving it all up to come to Paris to work just for my own living […]. Duty! Well, just let them take my place I've taken things to the bitter end and it's simple material impossibility that's defeating me – […] Six months without talking complete isolation, of course in the family's eyes I'm a monster for not earning anything' (Merlhès 78).

The Countess eventually bore all the expenses of Emil's education; he



Emil Gauguin, c. 1885 (from Merlhès, 1984).

stayed at the Söro academy till he was eighteen, according to Pola (in Malingue, 1959, p. 32), having attended 'from the age of ten up' (Gauguin to Schuffenecker, December 1896, sale, Nouveau Drouot, 8 December 1980, no. 87).

Probably thanks to Peter Krøyer (1851-1909), Gauguin was able to



Self-Portrait, painting by Peter Krøyer, 1879. Skagens Museum.

exhibit at 30 Amaliegade from **1-5 May**. Krøyer was a young painter and member of the Society of Friends of Art, which Gauguin had attended since his arrival in Denmark (Merlhès 61), though he had probably first met Krøyer in Paris (Merlhès, 1984, p. 407, note 159). 'The main task of the society is to support the efforts of new art', Krøyer stated ('Kjobenhavn. Kunstforeningen', *Politiken*, 29 March 1885, p. 2). But the critics ignored the exhibition. Gauguin was furious, and, thinking that the exhibition had been prematurely closed, denounced the clandestine pressure of 'the old academic clan', which was, he thought, 'trembling' at the thought of him (Merlhès, 1984, p. 413, note 173, and Merlhès 78).

His son Paul had nearly died of pneumonia, from which he was only now recovering (Merlhès 78).

June

'I haven't worked much in Denmark'; paints were expensive and of execrable quality, and he preferred to draw. 'It won't be long before I send a few things to Paris, so ask Durand-Ruel to take something at any price at all so I can buy paints – In any case, in two months I shall either have left this earth or I shall come to live in Paris as a homeless worker anything

1885

March
The poet Déroulède, now President of the Ligue des Patriotes, preaches France's salvation through authority.

30 March
Fall of Jules Ferry, after the Chamber of Deputies has rejected further colonial expeditions, whose cost in money and men is too high. A new period begins: the government is unstable and the forces hostile to the regime are gaining strength.

6 April
China renounces Tonkin and Annam.

25 November
Death of the Spanish King Alfonso XII.

17 December
French protectorate imposed on Madagascar.

5 January
At Antonin Proust's suggestion, a banquet is organised at Père Lathuille's to celebrate the anniversary of the Manet retrospective. Zola and the Impressionists, with the exception of Pissarro, attend. As of early 1885, the Impressionist dinners take place regularly at the café Riche, on the first Thursday of every month (D. Wildenstein: *Catalogue raisonné Claude Monet*, Lausanne-Paris, 1979, vol. II, pp. 34, 39).

February
Édouard Dujardin, with Teodor de Wyzewa (b. 1862), founds *La Revue wagnérienne*, whose first number appears on 8 February.



Teodor de Wyzewa, pastel caricature by Louis Anquetin, c. 1890 (from Rewald, 1956).

6 March-15 April
Eugène Delacroix exhibition at the École nationale des beaux-arts, related to the subscription for a monument to his memory. Gauguin is absent but in **May** requests from Schuffenecker a photo of *The Shipwreck of Don Juan* in exchange for one of his works (Merlhès 78; cf. no.*257*).

March
Seurat: *La Grande Jatte*.



Mette and Paul Gauguin in Copenhagen, photographed by Julie Laurberg & Gad. Musée de Tahiti.

rather than suffer in this vile country. The Danes! You have to have been here like me to really know them. The most complete slavery' (Merlhès 79).

22 June
A letter to Durand-Ruel indicates that Gauguin is back in Paris and is being put up by Schuffenecker at 29 Rue Boulard. A few scattered sentences suggest that Mette's family must have come up with a shameful machination in order to force him to leave (Merlhès 82, 84, 123). Gauguin took with him Clovis, his favourite son, now aged six (the return was by ship to Kiel, then by train via Hamburg, Cologne, and Liège, cf. Merlhès, 1989, p. 21).
Without a penny to his name, and owing money to Dillies, Gauguin asked Durand-Ruel to buy back a Monet and a Renoir previously awarded to him as commission (Merlhès 80; cf. *Chronology*, October 1884).

June
Gauguin, living at Schuffenecker's, notes 'though he entered Impressionism rather late, his development has not been without interest, his eye is individual' (Merlhès 81, to Pissarro). But later he wrote: 'he took his [Impressionist] tack out of cussedness or venality' (Joly-Segalen XIII, to De Monfreid, early 1893).

De Chamaillard obtains his degree at the Caen law faculty (Le Bihan, 1978, p. 120), but is not called to the Bar till 1897, according to Merlhès (1984, p. 503, note 280).

From late June to early July
Gauguin spends three months in Dieppe (Merlhès 85, to Pissarro) in the home of an unknown friend (cf. *Introduction* to Dieppe). He also painted in the Dieppe hinterland, in Varengeville (cf. for example, *183*) and in the valley of the Saâne (cf. for example, no. *189*).
Clovis is entrusted to Marie Uribe, Gauguin's sister (Merlhès 86). She is at this point living in a luxurious apartment at 50 Boulevard de Courcelles (Cogniat-Rewald sketchbook, p. 13), near the parc Monceau, with her two children María Elena, born 1878, and Pedro, born 1879 – her third child, Carmen, Pedro's twin sister, died in 1884 (Malingue, 1987, p. 43; Merlhès, 1989, p. 21).

August
Gauguin is awaiting the arrival of a crate from Denmark bearing personal belongings and paintings, which he is hoping to sell while looking for work (Merlhès 82); but the contents disappoint him (Merlhès 86).
He is full of plans: to rent a studio from Bouillot and work for him; to spend the next summer in Brittany where life is 'cheaper' (advice given by Jobbé-Duval, according to Chassé, 1965, p. 23, or by Granchi-Taylor; and to encourage Mette to work to advance his reputation in Denmark, so that they can live together again (Merlhès 83).



Degas (1) at Dieppe among his friends, including Ludovic Halévy (2) and Jacques-Émile Blanche (3), photographed by Barnes in 1885. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Shortly after 22 August or c. 10 September
Gauguin meets Degas (1834-1917), who invites him to drop by. Degas was staying in Dieppe with his friend the writer Ludovic Halévy from 22 August to 12 September, but in late August made an excursion to Paramé and mont Saint-Michel (cf. *Degas*, Paris, galeries nationales du Grand Palais, 9 February-16 May 1988, p. 383.) 'Of course I went there two days later and I saw my man Degas working in Blanche's son's studio but when I rang the maid told me that Degas and Blanche's son were out' (Merlhès 85). That summer, Jacques-Émile Blanche and the little artistic colony around him in Dieppe showed nothing but scorn for Gauguin (Blanche, 1928, pp. 5-6).



J.-É Blanche's villa and studio at Le Bas-Fort-Blanc, Dieppe. Photo: Musée de Dieppe.

If we are believe the journal of the landscape artist George A. Lucas, **on 16 September** Whistler arrived in Dieppe, where he presented his *Ten O'Clock Lecture*, in which he makes an analogy between the art of the Parthenon and that of Hokusai (*Post-Impressionism*, London, Royal Academy of Art, 17 November 1979-16 March 1980, p. 72). He left again



Caricature of Whistler and his *Ten O'Clock Lecture*, 'Why Do You Tarry, Mr. Whistler?' by J.W. Alexander in *The Evening Telegram*, 20 December 1886. Photo: New York Public Library.

around 18 September, so that Gauguin can only have heard of this second-hand (*The Paintings of James McNeill Whistler*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1980, p. 158).

19 September
Gauguin returns to Dieppe after an excursion to London (Merlhès 85), where he 'was completely bored despite numerous excursions, visits to museums […] to the Zoo' (*Les Guêpes*, no. 5, 12 June 1899, in 'Paul Gauguin […] Les Guêpes', *Journal de la Société des Océanistes*, December 1965, p. 22). This trip, on Spanish business (the revolutionaries no doubt sought to take advantage of the Hispano-German crisis) probably lasted eight days – rather than three weeks, as he told Mette by letter, no doubt in order to give her reason to hope: 'So for the future the business is almost settled' (Merlhès 84). An address noted in the Huyghe sketchbook (p. 13), 'M. 10 Grosvenor Place Venner Road Sydenham London' is that of Georges Maraux, Zorrilla's personal secretary, who had sought refuge in London in spring 1884 (Merlhès 1989, p. 22).
Three or four days later – **around 22 September** – Gauguin returns to Schuffenecker's in Paris (Merlhès 84). His hopes of working with the sculptor Bouillot that winter had evaporated: 'I still don't know what I'm going to do in Paris without money or furniture and above all without a job'. He complains that Mette has left him without news of the children for too long (Merlhès 84).

Around this time, Pissarro was seeking a new style (Bailly-Herzberg 277).

From early October
Gauguin has moved into Favre's house at Rue Perdonnet (Merlhès 85); the *Marsouin* has a girlfriend called Gabrielle Tessier (8 July 1852-1941), who was probably living with her mother, at 113 Rue Monge (cf. no. *147*).



17-19 rue Perdonnet. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Marie Uribe is quick to hand Clovis back to Gauguin. Clovis is in flourishing health after a stay in the country; Gauguin leaves him for a week with Jobbé-Duval while looking for a place to rent. With Clovis to care for, Gauguin resigns himself to looking for 'a little job at the Bourse while I'm waiting', and asks Mette to send winter clothes and bedding, along with his fencing masks (Merlhès 86).
The sale of a Renoir and a Pissarro, on which he was counting, falls through (Merlhès 87).

October
Seurat works out the theory of 'scientific Impressionism', meaning the division of the tone into little touches of pure colour, which are optically mixed (Rewald, 1946, 4th ed., 1973, p. 607).
A few months earlier, Signac had met Guillaumin on the Paris quais. He introduced him to Seurat; Guillaumin had, in turn, introduced Signac to Pissarro (Merlhès 1984, p. 418, note 189, notule 1). Seurat finally met Pissarro in **October** at Durand-Ruel's through Guillaumin (letter from Seurat to Fénéon, 20 June 1890, in Halperin, 1970, p. 508). Pissarro became interested in their theory and a year later became a fervent Pointillist.



Georges Seurat. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



Paul Signac, c. 1883 (from Rewald, 1956).



10 rue Cail. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

November
Poverty is making itself felt keenly in Gauguin's flat: 'Clovis doesn't have any woollen vests, apart from that he's fine […] it's been very difficult these last few days to find anything for us to eat – [Clovis] is very sweet and plays all alone in his little corner without tormenting me; he sometimes asks where mother is and when she'll be coming? You'll find he has fond memories of you when you see him again' (Merlhès 88).
While Mette failed to send bedding, a very cold spell continued through November and December (Merlhès, 1984, p. 418, note 186): 'Clovis is sleeping on a little bed that I've rented and I'm on a mattress with my travel blanket – […] by night, we freeze and I haven't a penny to spend on [bedding]. […] The *Marsouin* who hasn't a penny to his name still manages to help me a little at the moment – Don't just let yourself go and above all remember the hardest hit of the two of us is me' (Merlhès 89).

December
There is a plan afoot for organising a complete exhibition of avant-garde painting in March – 'without the dealers butting in' (cf. Guillaumin to Pissarro [**25 December**] cited in Merlhès 1984, p. 419, note 189). It will include 'new Impressionists who have some talent' (Merlhès 92); this refers to Signac and Seurat, recruited via Pissarro who had recently been converted to their Pointillist theory.

To make some money, Mette had already sold several Impressionist paintings from Gauguin's collection: 'I want to keep hold of my 2 Césannes* […]. Better sell the Degas drawing instead […] – Now with the

22 May 1885
Death of Victor Hugo.



Victor Hugo on his deathbed, photographed by Nadar. Photo: BNF.

Claude Monet is accepted for the Exposition internationale at the Georges Petit gallery, which gives him access to major collectors (Merlhès XXVI); Gauguin is delighted by this recognition of Monet's talents (Merlhès 79).
Félix Bracquemond: *Du dessin et de la couleur*, essay.
Zola: *Germinal*.
Daudet: *Tartarin sur les Alpes*.
Pasteur develops the anti-rabies vaccine.



Pasteur Inoculating the Anti-Rabies Vaccine, engraving (from Beaute, 1988).

Daimler and Benz (Germany) create the petrol-driven car.

exception of the Manet and Miss Cassatt you must stop selling or one day I shan't have anything left – The important thing is my stuff, you must talk it up' (Merlhès 90).
Gauguin has asked Philipsen to present a few of his paintings to the Christmas Show in Denmark, but they were rejected (Merlhès 91, 92).
Marie Uribe, having made no further offers to take Clovis off Gauguin's hands, now announces that she is leaving for South America (Merlhès 91); in fact, Uribe went on ahead, and Marie joined him only some years later (cf. *Chronology*, 30 April 1887).
Gauguin is challenged to a duel by his former friend Cellot. Gauguin had called him a 'knight of industry', since Cellot was taking part in the 'Impressionist tapestry' project – cf. *Chronology*, 16 June 1883 – and was involved in the promotion of a special varnish for the merchant navy (cf. Merlhès XVIII and 62). Cellot finally backed down.
It was now winter, and Gauguin could not paint without models (Merlhès 91). By chance, a second former stockbroker turned painter, Achille Granchi-Taylor, agreed to

Achille Granchi-Taylor, detail of the photo reproduced on p. 593. Photo: BNF.

pose for him, and pay for the painting 'with a generous supply of paints' (Granchi-Taylor to C. Reitz, 6 February 1920, copy in the Basel Museum).

Probably early in the final third of December

Clovis, weakened by hunger, falls ill. Gauguin later revealed to Mette that it was smallpox: 'I had 20 centimes in my pocket and for the last 3 days we'd been living on credit, eating stale bread./- At my wits' end, I had the idea of offering my services to a station bill-posting company as a bill-poster – My bourgeois clothes made the manager laugh but I told him very seriously that my child was ill and I wanted to work. So I posted bills for 5f a day; […] This work lasted three weeks' (Merlhès 94).
The long-awaited bedding arrived at the end of the month (Merlhès 92).

1886

January

'Today the Managing Director took me on as inspector and administrative secretary for 200f a month. They apparently found me intelligent and in a year's time I think I'll have a better post. In fact, they're in negotiations with Spain to start a branch in Madrid where I shall be appointed manager with a low salary 300f a month plus accommodation and 20% on deals… Your Danish vanity will be offended at having a bill-sticker for a husband' (Merlhès 94).
A draft contract dated **26 February** – which Gauguin never signed – was found in the Schuffenecker archives (Malingue, 1987, p. 76), yielding the name 'Société Anonyme de Publicité Diurne et Nocturne'. This company, founded in 1857 and based at 161 Rue Montmartre, was then seeking to extend its activities to Switzerland and Germany.
'The little 'un's health is improving every day and I'm not thinking of sending him back, on the contrary, I fully expect to take more children back as soon as things are going better – […] I very calmly examine all the letters [of yours] that tell me in cold blood – and quite rightly – that I loved you. But that you are [now] only a mother, not a wife'. Mette having, he said, left him 'no illusions about the future', she should not be surprised if he decides to find another person to live with (Merlhès 94).

February

'Clovis is heroic; in the evening when we sit down to a piece of bread and sausage he doesn't think about the appetite he used to have he doesn't say a word, doesn't even ask to play and goes off to bed. […] in heart and mind, he's an adult now. […] I've really hardened up now and feel only disgust for what's happened. […] Don't worry about me forgiving your mistakes; I've long forgotten all that' (Merlhès 95).

13 March

Durand-Ruel has entered into relations with the American Art Association of New York (Venturi, 1939, vol. II, p. 214), and embarks for the USA,



Clovis, Gauguin's son, in Copenhagen, c. 1885, photographed by Grundtvig. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

where he wants to exhibit 300 Impressionist works in order to save his gallery (Venturi, 1939, vol. I, p. 77).

At the *atelier* Cormon, Bernard notices an artist 'who paints furiously' (Bernard: unpublished article on Van



Photo of Toulouse-Lautrec's 1886 portrait of Émile Bernard annotated by Bernard.

Gogh written in 1889, in *Bernard*, 12 May-4 November 1990, p. 383; Bernard, 1903, p. 677): in **March**, Vincent Van Gogh is indeed in Paris, having left Holland the previous November never to return. He moves into Theo's little apartment at 25 Rue de Laval (Stolwijk, 1999, pp. 37 and 39). He goes to work at the *atelier* Cormon, perhaps as early as the month of his arrival, because of the lack of room at his brother's (cf. Johanna Van Gogh-Bonger: 'Memoir', in *The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, Greenwich, Connecticut, New York Graphic Society, 1958, p. XL), though the witness of Hartrick (1939, p. 40) and a Van Gogh letter of August-October 1886 (Hulsker, 1993, p. 31) indicate that he did not return there in autumn 1886: 'I attended Cormon's *atelier* for three or four months, but I didn't find it as useful as I was expecting. […] I left […], and since then I've been working on my own' (Letter 459a).

Probably c. 20-22 March or c. 17-20 April

(weather considerations make either hypothesis possible)
Gauguin makes a trip to Bordeaux, of which the only evidence is a painting showing the port. An address in his Cogniat-Rewald sketchbook (p. 16) – 'Marie Lechaux 164 Rue Ste-Catherine Bordo' – is that of Victor Marie Lechaux, a pharmacist, and may be where he stayed. Coincidence or not, it is not far from the Rue de Toulouse, where the Spanish revolutionary committee had its base (cf. no. *211*).

During the second quarter

Gauguin organises a lottery on his own behalf, with help from Carey, a former colleague at Bertin's, and the banker Mirtil (Merlhès 1984, p. 426, note 195, and Merlhès 98); his objective is to raise enough for a trip, since 'the most reasonable thing would be to run off to Brittany where it's possible to work living in a boarding house for FF 60 a month' (Merlhès 99), but it comes to nothing.

Spring

Seurat meets Charles Henry (1859-1926), a young scholar working on a



Charles Henry, later in life. Photo: Boyer-Viollet.

synthesis of human activities philosophical, artistic and scientific. In 1885, Henry had published his work on the expressiveness of lines: *Théorie des directions* and *Traité sur l'esthétique scientifique*. In 1886, he publishes *La Loi de l'évolution de la sensation musicale* (Rewald, 1961, p. 64).
Pissarro is now entirely committed to Neo-Impressionism (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 40).

6 April

Cormon has expelled Bernard from his *atelier*, viewing his progressive ideas as mere indiscipline. Bernard sets out on a walking tour from Asnières into Brittany, via mont Saint-Michel, Cancale and Saint-Malo. He is still in Saint-Malo in **late May** (cf. Madeleine to Bernard, 31 May 1886, PSU) and continues to Saint-Briac, where he spends two months in Mme Lemasson's inn (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 55).

10 April

The first exhibition of French Impressionists in New York, organised by Durand-Ruel, is moderately successful (Venturi, 1939, vol. I, p. 77).
Gauguin visits the Salon, which opens on **1 May**, meeting the 'the famous Brandès*, who pretended not to recognise [me]' (Merlhès 97): was this Edvard, or his brother Georg? (Merlhès, 1984, pp. 425-426, note 194).

Moret again exhibits at the Salon, giving a Parisian address (Boucher-Sauvage, 1986, p. 90).

May

Having finally admitted his inability to look after his son, Gauguin is resigned to parting with him: 'Clovis is currently in the country boarding school and apparently well, I haven't dared go and see him because I can't pay the next month of his board'. He is disgusted by Mette's silence: 'I've seen my sister to whom you write long letters – Just to relieve my feelings, she goes about shouting from the rooftops that I'm a wretch, […] that this poor woman without anywhere to live any furniture any support has been abandoned for this horrible painting of mine' (Merlhès 97).

15 May-15 June

On the premises of the Maison Dorée, on the first floor, above the 1 Rue Laffitte mezzanine, the 8th and last 'Impressionist' exhibition



La Maison Dorée on boulevard des Italiens, etching by M. Pothémont (from C. Simond: *Paris de 1800 à 1900*, Paris, 1901, vol. III).

takes place, thanks to Guillaumin, who has managed to recruit Degas. Degas is even willing to accept Gauguin (Merlhès, 1984, p. 419, note 189). Pissarro, the other organiser, insists on including his own friends. Symbolism in the form of Redon (invited by Guillaumin) makes an appearance, but the Divisionism of Seurat (*La Grande Jatte*) and his followers, Signac and Pissarro, is principally responsible for the *succès de scandale* created. Renoir and Monet have given up the Impressionist exhibitions, reserving themselves for the next *Exposition internationale* at Georges Petit's gallery (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. II, p. 48, note 1).
The nineteen paintings from 1884-1885 and the pear-wood low-relief given to Pissarro (ex-catalogue) exhib-



Gustave Kahn around 1890, lithograph by Maximilien Luce (from Rewald, 1956).

ited by Gauguin are reviewed in anodyne fashion. There is praise for Degas, followed by Pissarro and Berthe Morisot, but the big splash is made by Seurat. Some Danish painters, friends of Gauguin's, come to this exhibition to learn from it. Gauguin may have met Redon there (R. Bacou: *Lettres* […] *à Odilon Redon*, Paris, 1960, p. 189). Gustave Kahn (1859-1936), the Symbolist writer meets Gauguin there; he later described him thus 'He seemed tall, wearing a very simple grey suit and a very ordinary, rather narrow and dented felt-hat. His gaze was keen, very frank, and sometimes took on an expression of concern, above all, when he was looking at paintings, especially his own; there was a tone of great simplicity, a passion for truth clearly breaking out' (Kahn, 1925, p. 42).

Towards late May

On Pissarro's initiative, a banquet brings together a few critics and the Neo-Impressionists, along with Gauguin. The dinner takes place at Le Lac Saint-Fargeau (a music-hall at 296 Rue de Belleville) and festivities continue in the cafés of the grands boulevards. Gustave Kahn (1925, pp. 45-46) recounts: 'Naturally we talked above all about aesthetics and painting. Pointillism was going to conquer the world. Gauguin was reserved and told Pissarro about his plan for long voyages to remote places. ["I've been offered a place as an agricultural worker in Polynesia but it would mean giving up any future prospects and I daren't resign myself to that", he told Mette in Merlhès 99.] […] he didn't

1886

7 January
On Clemenceau's recommendation, General Boulanger enters the government as minister of war.

14 July
Boulanger acclaimed by the Parisian populace.

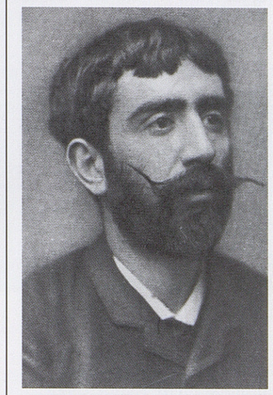
30 October
Last law on compulsory secular primary education, completing those of 1881 and 1882.

March
Zola: *L'Œuvre*.

15 June
Private view of the *Exposition internationale* at Georges Petit's gallery, rue de Sèze.

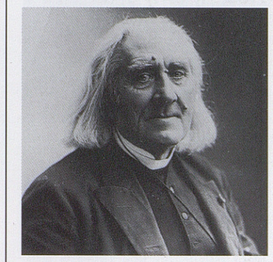
20 August-21 September
Second exhibition of the Société des artistes indépendants (cf. above).

18 September
Jean Moréas publishes 'Un manifeste littéraire, le symbolisme' (*Le Figaro littéraire*, pp. 150-151).

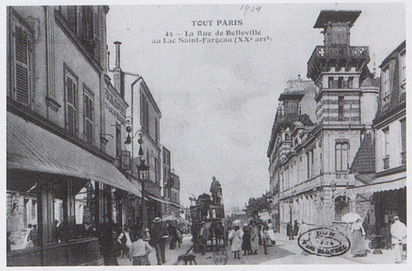


Jean Moréas (from Perruchot, 1961).

October
Opening in the New York bay of *Liberty Enlightening the World*, statue by Bartholdi.
Death of Liszt in Germany.



Franz Liszt, photographed by Nadar. Photo: BNF.



The music-hall Au Lac Saint-Fargeau, 296 rue de Belleville, 20th arrondissement, Paris, old postcard. Photo: BNF.

believe that the absolute pictorial truth had been discovered […] there was a place for other sorts of research'. The growing aesthetic divergence between master and pupil soon afterwards led to a parting of the ways.

It was probably around this juncture that Seurat read and copied out 'Gauguin's paper', supposedly by the 'great teacher Mani Vehbi Zunbul Zadi, the painter and precept-giver'. Ginette Cachin-Signac identified the latter as a Turkish poet who died in 1809 (in G.B.: 'Un poète turc a-t-il inspiré les néo-impressionnistes?', *Les Lettres françaises*, 7 January 1954, p. 9). Gauguin later copied this text into *Diverses choses* (pp. 209-212), and subsequently *Avant et après* (pp. 35-37) (Kahn, 1925, p. 44; Merlhès, 1989, p. 56; cf. no. *208*, inset on 'Gauguin's paper').

June
Gauguin deems the exhibition an overall success: 'Our exhibition has placed the whole question of Impressionism again in the spotlight, this time in its favour. I was a big success with the artists' (Merlhès 99). The engraver Félix Bracquemond (1833-1914), one of the promoters of first-wave *Japonisme* (cf. no. *214*), bought



Félix Bracquemond, Goupil and Cie photo. Photo: BNF.

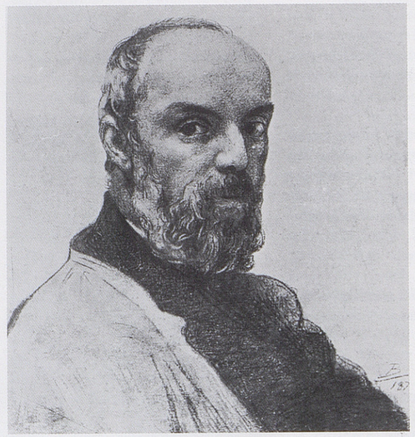
a picture from Gauguin: *Père Jean's Path (195)*. 'Befriended for [his] talent' (Merlhès 107), Gauguin was invited by Bracquemond to his house in Sèvres, as *214* testifies. There he was introduced to an old friend and former colleague of Bracquemond's at Haviland's Auteuil factory: Ernest Chaplet (1835-1909), the finest potter of his time (Merlhès, 1984, p. 426, note 196). 'Thrilled with [Gauguin's] sculpture', Chaplet suggested that Gauguin go that winter to his studio at 153 Rue Blomet, and make pots; they would divide any proceeds between them. Gauguin hoped, like Aubé before him, to make his fortune this way (Merlhès 99).

June
Theo and Vincent Van Gogh move to 54 Rue Lepic in Montmartre, in the block where Alphonse Portier lives; Portier soon after takes a few of Van Gogh's works on deposit (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 91). Guillaumin is interested by Van Gogh's painting, and is in turn noticed by Theo, who buys a few paintings from him. In this way Guillaumin and Vincent Van Gogh meet and become good friends (Serret-Fabiani, 1971, p. 65).

Seurat, Signac, Gauguin and Guillaumin intend to exhibit at the Société des Artistes indépendants show which will take place 20 August-21 September, Rue des Tuileries, bâtiment B (Bailly-Herzberg 339).

14 June
Paul Signac leaves for Les Andelys, leaving his friends to take down the Rue Laffitte exhibition. Seurat describes them as 'spineless, a bunch of cry-babies' (Merlhès XXVII, to Signac). Pissarro stores his pictures and the Gauguin relief panel at Signac's studio, in impasse Hélène, Boulevard de Clichy (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. II, p. 55, note 3).

19 June
Seurat is warned by Pissarro that Gauguin has entered Signac's studio to draw his own low-relief. Pissarro considers this intrusion 'true sailor's manners' (Merlhès XXVIII). Signac reassures Pissarro: 'Don't worry about Gauguin, I'd given him permission to work at my place without knowing that your paintings would be there, otherwise I should never have done so, in case anything happened' (Merlhès XXIX): the breakdown of relations between Pissarro and Gauguin is, it seems, by now complete.
However, **from late June**, Pissarro takes pains to ensure that Seurat, Signac, his son Lucien and Gauguin are all invited to the Nantes *Exposition des Beaux-Arts* organised by John Flornoy, his former student (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. II, p. 62, note 4).



Ernest Chaplet, engraving by Félix Bracquemond. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

From 23 June
Gauguin's presence at Chaplet's studio is documented (Merlhès 100). Roger Marx later said of Chaplet 'The man was as fine as his works' ('Souvenirs sur Ernest Chaplet', *Art et décoration*, March 1910, p. 90).
Gauguin is penniless, and is counting on the sale of Manet's *Knitting* (which is in Mette's hands) to pay Clovis' school-fees. He has left Rue Cail by July, and therefore discourages Mette from coming (probably with the Heegaards) to Paris (Merlhès 99, 101). Clovis finally remains at his country boarding school, Marie Uribe having agreed to pay his fees for July. Mette is very busy translating Zola's *L'Œuvre* for *Politiken* (Merlhès 101).

In Norway, Hermann Thaulow has gone mad after the loss of his fortune (Merlhès 99, 123).

July
'Schuffenecker […] is still an excellent fellow and […] is grateful to me for the progress he's making with my help', Gauguin writes. 'Unfortunately, his wife is getting on his nerves more and more, she's no companion to him, she's more and more of a harpy' (Merlhès 102).

Shortly before 12 July, the deadline for him to leave his lodgings, Gauguin obtains a loan of FF 300 from Eugène Mirtil 'allowing him to reach Brittany where he will spend his time painting' (Marcel Mirtil to Cogniat, 13 October 1955; Merlhès 105, and p. 426, note 195).

Evening of Friday 16 July
Having made his farewells to the Bracquemonds on the 14th (Merlhès 105), Gauguin sets off for Brittany, leaving Clovis without holidays at the Lennuier School at Antony (where Schuffenecker is to visit him). According to Granchi-Taylor (letter to C. Reitz, 6 February 1920) they travelled together; according to Delavallée (Chassé, 1955, p. 41), Granchi was then at Concarneau and came to join Gauguin, who intended to spend three months 'working at his art in a remote spot' called Pont-Aven. Since the 1870s, there had been an artists' colony at Pont-Aven, mainly composed of Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians (Merlhès 105, 110). There



August Hagborg, painting by Ernst Josephson, 1882. Private collection. Photo: Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde.

Gauguin met 'Hagborg's brother': Otto, brother of the Swede August Hagborg (1852-1925), who had been accepted by the Salon since 1876, and had received an award in 1879. He must have frequented Mette and the Thaulows in Paris (Merlhès 107, and p. 436, note 205).
Gauguin goes to live at the boarding-house of Marie-Jeanne Gloanec, 13 place de la Mairie, for the very moderate price of 'FF 75 a month bed and board' (Merlhès 107).
'There are almost no French people, all foreigners […] My painting sets people arguing and I must say gets a favourable reception from the Americans. That's one hope for the future' (Merlhès 107); 'I'm working hard here, and succeeding; people respect me as the best painter in Pont-Aven; […] everyone here […] competes for my advice' (Merlhès 110).
Gauguin asks Mette for a photo of his daughter Aline (Merlhès 107).
After June's quarrels with the Pointillists, Gauguin decides not to exhibit at the Société des Artistes indépendants. Guillaumin does likewise.

24 July
'Gauguin has sent me two very disagreeable letters. "Ah! Your little brushstroke!"': Signac reports Gauguin's derision to Lucien Pissarro (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. II, p. 81, note 3). 'It's the great betrayal […]. Of their own free will, these artists stand in the way of progress', Signac writes to Pissarro senior (Bailly-Herzberg, p. 66, note 1). Camille replies: 'I'm not surprised that Guillaumin and Gauguin won't join you at the Indépendants any more. Gauguin, it seems, is much less hard-pressed at the moment… I hope that, as he succeeds, he'll become a little less of a zealot… As to my old friend Guillaumin, I regret it for his sake. He thinks there's some machination in our struggle. It's absurd' (Bailly-Herzberg 349).



The *pension* Gloanec at Pont-Aven (from Thersiquel, 1986).



The *pension* Gloanec sign, panel by Herman van den Anker and Fernand Quignon, c. 1880-1881. Musée de Pont-Aven.



Marie-Jeanne Gloanec, detail, 1892. Photo: Musée de Pont-Aven.



The Knitting Room, pastel by Hubert Vos, 1889. Photo: Christie's.

Granchi-Taylor, who has arrived at Pont-Aven at the same time as Gauguin, gains a reputation locally for his working costume: 'frock coat and clogs, with a tall Yokohama hat on his head' (Chassé, 1955, p. 41).



Gathering of painters at Pont-Aven, including Puigaudeau (1) and Laval (2). Photo: Musée de Pont-Aven, album Puigaudeau.

That summer
Laval, aged twenty-five, is at Pont-Aven when Gauguin arrives; he becomes Gauguin's first pupil (Merlhès, 1989, p. 26): 'The only one who loved and followed him passionately', De Chamaillard later recorded (Salmon, 1925, p. 16).

That summer
Moret is staying at Le Pouldu: did he meet Gauguin? There is no evidence either way (Boucher-Sauvage, 1986, p. 90).
Du Puigaudeau, a painter of twenty-two staying at the *Pension Gloanec* in Pont-Aven (cf. Delavallée in Chassé, 1955, p. 45; Bernard's letter of 19 August 1886, in Malingue 1987, p. 92), becomes a friend of Gauguin's without ever declaring himself his pupil; Gauguin dubs him 'Picolo'. Hartrick, a Scottish artist who stayed in Pont-Aven, recounts the following episode in his memoirs: Gauguin, returning from painting *The Moulin du Bois d'Amour Bathing Place (221)*, ignored the mockery of the academic 'V'., i.e. the Dutch painter Vos, who had just received a medal at the Salon and was cited as pre-eminent among the Pont-Aven artists by the *Union agricole et maritime de Quimperlé* (1886, p. 3). Over the next fortnight, his student 'P'. (Du Puigaudeau, who had met Vos during his tour of Italy), left him for Gauguin, and suggested that Gauguin share the studio he had rented in the former Lézaven manor house (Hartrick, 1939, pp. 32-33). However, we do not currently know of any 1886 Gauguin work painted at Lézaven.

During the summer
At Pont-Aven, Delavallée, who is staying at the Julia hotel, haunt of academic painters and foreigners, makes



Henri Delavallée
(from Thersiquel, 1986).

friends with Gauguin: 'I was the only person, at least during the first few months, who could chat with him', he later claimed (letter to Chassé, 24 January 1931, Musée de Pont-Aven, M 98). Delavallée goes over to 'Impressionism'.

August

'My heart is as dry as the wood of the table', Gauguin tells Mette, 'and now I'm steeled against adversity and think only of working at my art' (Merlhès 111).
'This summer by the sea, he was pontificating, with a band of young men following him, listening to the master, the zealot […]. Moreover, it must be said, he has gradually acquired considerable influence', Camille tells Lucien Pissarro in January (Bailly-Herzberg 386).

Over the course of August

Having continued his trek through Lamballe, Tréguier, Morlaix, Landerneau, Brest, Plougastel-Daoulas, Douarnenez, Quimper, and Faouët, Bernard arrives at Concarneau. Schuffenecker comes to join Gauguin at Pont-Aven, but quickly leaves for Concarneau, where he is finishing his seaside holidays in that more urban environment. There he meets Émile Bernard, whom he initiates into Neo-Impressionism, which he himself has recently adopted, perhaps under Gauguin's influence (Merlhès 108, XXX). 'He talked a lot about the Impressionists and one Gauguin […] for whom he had the greatest admiration.[…] He gave me a card with a recommendation for Monsieur Gauguin, who was then at Pont-Aven', Bernard tells us (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 59).

16 August at the latest

Bernard arrives in Pont-Aven and stays at the *Pension Gloanec*. 'There's […] an Impressionist painter called Gauguin, he's quite something; thirty-six years old, he paints and draws really well and, what's more, he's no theorist' (Bernard to his parents, 19 August 1886, in Malingue, 1987, p. 92). Recommended by Schuffenecker, Bernard is introduced to Gauguin by Granchi-Taylor (see below). The meeting did not lead to anything: 'My stay at Pont-Aven passed without our making friends; we didn't even talk, though we were sat next to each other at mealtimes' (Bernard, 1903, p. 677).
Bernard later stated that he spent two months at Pont-Aven (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 61).

Granchi-Taylor was 'a casual acquaintance whom I had often met in the capital', Bernard tells his parents (19 August 1886). A photo in the collection of the Bibliothèque nationale shows that the two men had known each other at the *atelier* Cormon (cf. *Chronology*, c. October or mid-November 1884).
While at Pont-Aven, Granchi-Taylor and Gauguin have 'a serious falling out', and Granchi paints out Gauguin's friendly dedication of his portrait (Granchi to C. Reitz, 6 February 1920, cf. no. *205*).

Bernard finds one of his *atelier* Cormon friends at the *Pension Gloanec*, 'the great LAVAL' (Bernard to his parents, 19 August 1886, in Malingue, 1987, p. 92). He later described him as 'very tall, hollow featured, and exquisitely courteous' (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 84). He also meets Du Puigaudeau (same letter). Delavallée later told Chassé (1955, p. 45) that 'Laval was a very intelligent man, but of very delicate health'.

Around this time

Van Gogh acquaints himself with Pointillism, which had had a starring role in recent exhibitions – it is possible that Pissarro, who had been close to both brothers since the summer, had already initiated him (Bailly-Herzberg, vol. I, p. 40; Hulsker, 1980, p. 238).

Three seascapes dated '86' (*Cowherd, Bellangenet Beach, 234; Rocky Coast, 235; Rocks, Sea, 236)* are the only indications that Gauguin visited Le Pouldu that year. Le Pouldu is a village some thirty kilometres from Pont-Aven, in a much wilder region, with a rugged coastline all rocks and reefs.

16 September

Frits and Ingeborg Thaulow are divorced (cf. no. *44*).

During September

At the Indépendants, Pissarro meets Schuffenecker, who praises Pointillism and tells him that in Brittany 'Gauguin is really taking that road', but for Pissarro the friendship is at an end (Merlhès 112). Pissarro writes to Lucien [on **17 September**], informing him that he has met Anquetin: 'he too wants to go down the [Pointillist] road' (Bailly-Herzberg 353).

10 October-30 November 1886, extended till 15 January 1887

Municipal *Exposition des Beaux-Arts* in Nantes, with no less than 1,799 works. Gauguin shows a Rouen and a Copenhagen painting; it falls to Schuffenecker to send them (Merlhès, 1984, p. 437, note 206, notule 4). No reviews of the Gauguin works are known.

13 October

Gauguin leaves for Paris, where his faithful friend Schuffenecker has found him a 'little hovel' at 257 Rue Lecourbe: an insalubrious flat in a old two-storey building, where he quickly falls ill. Its sole merit was its proximity to Chaplet's Rue Blomet studio (Cogniat-Rewald sketchbook, p. 13; Merlhès 1984, p. 444, note 214 and Merlhès 113). On his return, he immediately starts working on ceramics at Chaplet's studio: 'I'm working like a galley-slave' (Merlhès 114).
According to Perruchot (1961, p. 133), Laval returned to Paris with Gauguin (cf. no. *238*).
Gauguin sees his sister Marie; she has ignored Clovis over the last few months, and 'berates [Gauguin], claiming that for eight years […he] hasn't done a stroke of work except on [his] painting'. Her husband wishes to set up a finance company in Panama (after his ruin in Paris), and Marie is thinking of using Gauguin as a less expensive proxy in Paris (Merlhès 115).

Bernard walks through Lorient, Auray, and Vannes to Rennes, where he takes a train, arriving in Paris in **early autumn** (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 61), perhaps in time to see the Pointillist works of Seurat and Signac at the second Salon des indépendants *(Bernard*, 12 May-4 November 1990, p. 95).

Autumn

Bernard deposits some of the works painted during his trek at père Tanguy's shop in Rue Clauzel (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 64).

Van Gogh becomes a 'regular' at père Tanguy's shop (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 91).

November

'Hostilities are breaking out more and more among the romantic Impressionists, they meet very regularly. Degas himself often comes to the café, Gauguin is once again his bosom friend and often goes to see him, curious, isn't it, this to and fro of interests' (Merlhès XXXI, Camille to Lucien Pissarro, 2nd half of November). Gauguin considered Degas the only artist of solid reputation never to have made any compromises (Merlhès, 1984, p. 443, note 211; cf. *Introduction* to Paris 1886-1887).

Late November

In the café de la Nouvelle-Athènes, an incident exacerbates the divide between Gauguin and Guillaumin, on the one hand, and Signac, accompanied by Seurat and Pissarro, on the other.
'The Impressionists are finished, whatever that zealot Gauguin says', Pissarro tells Lucien (Merlhès XXXII).

By or before early December

Gauguin is in hospital for twenty-seven days with angina (probably Quinsy). When he comes out, on 26



Paul Tampier, sanguine by Louis Anquetin, c. 1887. Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée départemental Maurice Denis 'Le Prieuré'.



Auguste Delaherche drawing pottery from the kiln, rue Blomet, c. 1888-1889, photograph by D. Fleuriet, Paris. Beauvais, Musée départemental de l'Oise.

December at the latest, he takes Clovis to live with him, having paid for his school fees thanks to the sale of a Jongkind (for FF 350), on the proceeds of which he has been living since his return from Brittany. But Clovis still 'has no shoes to his feet and no toys for Christmas' (Merlhès 115).
'I've known absolute poverty, that is, hunger and all the rest. […] You get used to it and with will enough you can laugh it off. But what's really terrible is that it stops you working, stops you developing your intellect. […] It's true that suffering whets the mind. But you mustn't have too much, or you die of it' (passage from the *Cahier pour Aline*, no page nos., describing the worst moments of his life in Paris with Clovis).

Around this time

Anquetin lives at 86 Avenue de Clichy, where he gives *soirées* with Tampier, Toulouse-Lautrec and Bernard, all friends from the *atelier* Cormon (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, pp. 66-67).

2 December

Du Puigaudeau does his military service at Hyères (Merlhès, 1989, p. 31).

1887

6 January

Gauguin, Degas and Zandomeneghi (1841-1917) are witnesses at the marriage of Heymann – no doubt Portier's friend, the broker and dealer – to *maître* Gaëtan's daughter (Bailly-Herzberg 377).

Shortly before 23 January

Gauguin shows Bracquemond 'the products of his folly just out of the kiln […] 55 pieces in good condition' (Merlhès 116). Bracquemond describes them, according to Pissarro as 'sailor's art, borrowing from all kinds of things' (Bailly-Herzberg 387, Camille to Lucien Pissarro, 23 January 1887). But 'Schuff says they are masterpieces and so does the craftsman [Chaplet]' (Merlhès 115).



Federico Zandomeneghi, c. 1895. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Bracquemond attempts to find an outlet for Gauguin (and Pissarro) in the person of Énot, a dealer in 'Glassware, Faience and Bronzes' at 13 Rue des Pyramides, but this quite quickly falls through. Bracquemond then attempts to find other outlets, while Gauguin dissuades him from asking Durand-Ruel (Merlhès, 1984, pp. 447-449, note 216).

During the winter

Bernard shows his Pointillist paintings in a little group exhibition at Asnières; Signac notices his work and invites him to visit his studio (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 67).

According to Welsh-Ovcharov (1981, p. 91), Van Gogh meets Signac in père Tanguy's shop in **January-February**.

1886 (continued)



Pierre Loti, 1885. Photo: BNF.

Pierre Loti: *Pêcheurs d'Islande*.
Rimbaud: *Les Illuminations*.
Édouard Drumont: *La France juive*.
Mallarmé's Tuesday evening gatherings begin; poets, aesthetes and artists meet there (Rewald, 1961, p. 14).
Opening of the musée du Luxembourg.
Foundation of the Institut Pasteur.
Hertz (Germany): electromagnetic waves.

1887

The Compagnie universelle du canal interocéanique de Panama is increasingly indebted; the scandal concerning its bankruptcy breaks early in 1889.

January

Creation of the Union indochinoise, comprising the protectorates of Annam, Tonkin, Cambodia, and, later, Laos.

During the winter

A revanchiste campaign grows up around the figure of Boulanger, leading Bismarck to take intimidatory measures. 'Here people talk of war; it's a way out and I'm hoping for it, but I don't really believe it'll happen', writes Gauguin (Merlhès 120).

20-30 April

Following the arrest of the Lorraine police inspector Schnaebelé, accused of spying by Germany, the crisis is at its height: President Grévy prevents Boulanger issuing Germany with an ultimatum. In **May**, a new government is formed. Hereafter, Boulanger's allies miss no occasion to provoke demonstrations of his popularity.



Cover of the daily *La Révision*, c. 1886. [Boulanger wields the broom.] Photo: BNF.

3 May

Germanophobic Boulangiste demonstrations against the French-language performance of Wagner's *Lohengrin* at the Éden-Théâtre in Paris. Lamoureux is obliged to cancel subsequent performances (Rewald, 1961, p. 15; D. Pistone: 'Les œuvres de Wagner à Paris', *Revue internationale de musique française*, February 1980, p. 41).

8 July

As Boulanger departs for his provincial command, a popular demonstration shows that the supporters of the Commune have converted to Boulangisme.



Monsieur Lamoureux Offering Wagner French Gold from the Performances at the Eden-Théâtre, caricature by E. Cottin in the pamphlet *L'Anti-Wagner*, April 1887. Photo: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de l'Opéra.

29 January
'Laval is living at 150bis bd Pereire but here's the snag; I'm expecting him to come and live in my studio any day now – […] Best combine our two penuries, it'll be more fun', Gauguin tells 'Picolo' Puigaudeau (Merlhès, 1989, pp. 31-32).

February
'Time goes by with so little change in adversity that you see yourself sinking into the slough, you grow inert and all but cease to feel – […] I've been deprived of the sight of [Clovis] since the New Year, because I owe three months of fees […] Currently it's freezing, it's as if it were done deliberately, just for me. The walls are running with water and I'm beginning to get pain in my shoulders – […] Now I bet not one of the children can speak French. Your family must be happy, they've won on every front', he writes to Mette (Merlhès 120).

Guillaumin invites Gauguin to spend the evening of **12 February** with Zandomeneghi and various friends (Merlhès XXXIII). This was no doubt to celebrate his own recent engagement, on 6 January, to his first cousin, Marie-Joséphine Gareton; she was a qualified teacher of literature in girls' secondary schools, seventeen years younger than Guillaumin (Serret-Fabiani, 1971, p. 64; Gray, 1997, p. 40).

March
'I have so much to put up with, it's almost more than a man can bear' (Merlhès 121). 'My reputation as an artist is growing every day but in the meantime I sometimes go three days without eating which destroys not just my health but my energy. […] If you want some idea of the life I've led just ask Schuffenecker who has supported me a bit, little as he has to spare' (Merlhès 122).
Having lost all hope of selling paintings, and adjourned his plan of managing a business in Madagascar, Gauguin decides to embark for Panama, where his brother-in-law Uribe has opened a trading concern (Merlhès, 1984, p. 443, note 213).
He therefore asks Mette 'Will you take care of getting Clovis home?'; 'This child mustn't bear the brunt of your and your family's lack of affection for him; he sees into people's hearts; he won't say anything, but he'll suffer. […] Speak ill of his father and he'll suffer agonies. […] I can't go and see him as I haven't paid his board recently, but **now my heart and guts are steeled against any suffering that comes my way'. He confesses to Mette that he loves her despite everything** (Merlhès 121, 122): **'I hope to see us reunited again one of these days, but I can assure you that it won't be with any of your lot coming between us, or I'll turn from a good and loving man into a ferocious animal'** (Merlhès 123).

According to Merlhès (1984, p. 443, note 213), **at some point this year**, Marie Uribe settles with her two children in the Black Forest (Merlhès 136), where she seems to have lived for two years, perhaps working as a dressmaker, before going to join her husband in Panama.

March
Bernard's parents rent a new house in Asnières (unpublished letter of 27 February 1887, quoted in Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 263).

Bernard meets and befriends Van Gogh at père Tanguy's shop, **probably in early spring 1887**, Vincent 'having asked to meet [him]' (this is the most likely of the various accounts). Van Gogh then takes him to 54 Rue Lepic (Bernard, April 1893, p. 328, and 1903, p. 678; Merlhès 1989, p. 77). 'His painting was [first] bitumen and [then] Pointillist', Bernard remembered (1903, p. 677).

Probably March-April
(Van Gogh letter 461; *Bernard*, 12 May-4 November 1990, p. 97.)
Van Gogh sets up a show of Japanese prints at the working-class café du Tambourin, 62 Boulevard de Clichy,



Le Café du Tambourin, drawing by Coll-Toc. Illustration in John Grand-Carteret: *Raphaël et Gambrinus ou l'Art dans la brasserie*, Paris, éditions Louis Westhauser, 1886.



Agostina Segatori, painting by August Hagborg, c. 1870-1880. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

which is managed by the Neapolitan Agostina Segatori. The show 'had a great influence on Anquetin and Bernard, but it was such a disaster' (Letter 510, c. 15 July 1888).

Around this time
Van Gogh takes Anquetin and Bernard to the Bing gallery to study Japanese prints (Letter 511, 15 July 1888).



Advertisement for Samuel Bing in the *Catalogue illustré du Salon de 1887*, Paris, 1887. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

12 (?) March
After a visit to Signac, Anquetin and Bernard decide to give up Pointillism (Bailly-Herzberg 403). Bernard now deems this procedure 'ridiculous' and immediately plunges into 'the opposite theory'. 'I explained my ideas to Anquetin and then each of us separately, without seeing the other's work, experimented with individual, simplistic forms in very bright colours' (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, pp. 67-68).

Spring
Signac encourages Van Gogh to persevere with Pointillism (Hulsker, 1980, p. 278); the latter now often goes to paint in Asnières or at the île de la Grande Jatte (Bernard: preface to *Lettres de Vincent Van Gogh à Émile Bernard*, éd. Vollard, Paris, 1911, p. 11).

Starting in April
Theo Van Gogh favours Impressionism in expanding his business (Rewald, 1946; 4th ed., 1973, p. 10).

April
Gauguin sends Mette a power of attorney in case he inherits from his uncle Zizi (Merlhès 123).
At the last moment, after twenty-two months of separation, they meet again (Merlhès 137, 154). Gauguin offers his wife the choice of his personal belongings: 'Mette didn't need asking twice. Once Gauguin had left, she went through his paintings, frames, books, and ceramics, and returned to Copenhagen loaded with parcels' (Perruchot, 1961, p. 140). **Accompanied by Schuffenecker, who 'scolds' her a little, Mette goes to pick up Clovis from his school at Antony** (Merlhès 136).

Laval decides to follow Gauguin to Panama, in the belief that life in the tropics will do him more good than poverty and cold in Paris: 'I shall be able to work without a care, free, with an excellent companion and friend…' (Merlhès 1989, p. 38, to Puigaudeau, shortly before 10 April).

9 April
Leaving 'good old Schuff' to look after his affairs, Gauguin leaves Paris with Laval – accompanied as far as the port by Puigaudeau (or so his family tradition has it); he has decided to come and join them as soon as possible (Laurentin, 1989, p. 25). **On 10 April they embark at Saint-Nazaire for America on the French boat *Canada*, with just enough money to pay for the trip: FF 700** (according to Merlhès, 1989, p. 38). 'I'm going to Panama to live like a savage. I know a place one league off the Panama coast a little island Tabogas in the Pacific; it's almost uninhabited free and very fertile. I'm taking my paints and brush-



The village and bay of Taboga Island, 1952. Photo: BNF.

es and I shall renew my strength far from mankind' (Merlhès 122). His sources of information about this island are unknown, since, according to Maïotte Dauphite, his long 1867 trip did not take him further than Peru.

23 April
After a stop at Guadeloupe, the *Canada* arrives in Fort-de-France and leaves the same evening for La Guaira, then Puerto Cabello in Venezuela, then Sayanilla (Merlhès, 1984, p. 151).

During April
As he had hoped (letter of February 1887 to his mother and grandmother, bibliothèque de la Conservation du Musée du Louvre), Bernard leaves by rail for Saint-Briac, travelling via Le Ribay (Mayenne), whence he writes to his parents on **27 April** (bibliothèque de la Conservation du Musée du Louvre). He spends **two months** in Mme Lemasson's inn, decorating the walls of his room with religious and bucolic frescoes, and its windows and the glazed door of the dining room with paintings imitative of stained glass (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, pp. 68-69).

30 April
Gauguin and Laval arrive at the Atlantic port of Colón in the isthmus, which is still part of Colombia at this time: 'The crossing was tough, bad weather, and 3rd class passengers are penned up like sheep' (Merlhès 124). Gauguin joins his brother-in-law in Panama (on the Pacific), but 'his store doesn't look at all flourishing' (Merlhès 126), and 'there's nothing to be got out of him' (Merlhès 124). On the other hand, 'if we were ever really on our uppers, we could get a job within a day or two' (Merlhès 125). The idea that Uribe might invest in a little warehouse-store in Madagascar is soon eliminated (Laval to Puigaudeau, in Merlhès, 1989, p. 38). Within a week, the two friends are hoping to have settled on Taboga to live here 'like savages […] who aren't the least fortunate of people' (Merlhès 124).
Disappointment quickly follows. There is no land available either on the coast, because the Panama Canal is being dug, or in the mountains, because the Amerindians refuse to cede even the smallest plot.



Cutting the Panama Canal, United States of Colombia, c. 1881. Photo: BNF.

Gauguin has therefore begun thinking, before 12 May, of Martinique, which he had seen when the boat stopped there in April, 'a beautiful country where life is easy and cheap' (Merlhès 125). He decides to save the price of the crossing by working on the Canal for two months. Meanwhile Laval (who had trained in Bonnat's *atelier*) executes portraits, which are very well remunerated there, 'though they have to be done in a special way – very bad, which I can't do'.



Street, Colón, engraving by A. Lepère, 1884. Photo: BNF.

Gauguin 'has to shovel earth from 5.30 in the morning till 6 in the evening under the tropical sun and rain every day. Devoured by mosquitoes at night' (Merlhès 126). Merlhès believes that Gauguin is probably exaggerating for Mette's benefit, and that he had a comfortable foreman's job (1984, p. 459, note 222). Their postal address is *chez* Monsieur Liesse, Colón (Merlhès 125).

15 May
Theo believes that Vincent Van Gogh's palette is lightening (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 91, quoting Hulsker).

In Panama Laval has a violent attack of yellow fever; during a severe bout he attempts suicide, according to Gauguin, who claims to have prevented him (Joly-Segalen XXIV, August 1896).

25 May
Durand-Ruel organises a second Impressionist exhibition in New York (Venturi, 1939, vol. II, p. 218).

Late May or early June
A mass lay-off deprives Gauguin of his job (Merlhès 1984, pp. 458-460, **note 222 and *Chronology*, p. 603). Gauguin having curbed Laval's attack of yellow fever** (Merlhès, 1989, p.41), **they hastily depart for Martinique. They leave Colón between 2 and 7 June**, arrive at Fort-de-France on either **10 June** on the French steampacket *Amérique* or **14 June** on the *Ferdinand de Lesseps* (Merlhès, 1984, p. 461, note 222). **The following day** they arrive in Saint-Pierre: 'the two of



The bay, Saint-Pierre, Martinique, before the 1902 eruption, old postcard.

us are living in a negro hut, and it is a Paradise compared to the isthmus. Below is the sea flanked by cocopalms, above there are fruit trees of all kinds twenty-five minutes from the town', Gauguin writes. They are living on a fruit estate south of the capital and near Le Carbet: 'I hope to send some interesting pictures quite soon' (Merlhès 127); 'What I like best

3 December 1887
Election of Sadi Carnot to the Presidency. Boulangiste nationalism is the order of the day in the Chambre des députés.



Sadi Carnot, President of the Republic, 1887. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.



General Georges Boulanger, photographed by Nadar. Photo: BNF.

9 March
French-language première of Wagner's *The Valkyrie* at the théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels.

9 May-20 June
Retrospective of the work of Jean-François Millet (1814-1875) at the École nationale des beaux-arts.



The Painter Jean-François Millet, engraving by Trufaut (from C. Simond: *Paris de 1800 à 1900*, Paris, 1901, vol. III).



Rue Victor-Hugo, Saint-Pierre, before the catastrophe, old postcard.

are the figures, and every day there is a continual coming and going of negresses decked out in tawdry colours, their gracious movements infinitely varied' (Merlhès 129).
Their first postal address is *chez* Monsieur Victor Dominique, 30 Rue Victor-Hugo, then *chez* Monsieur Victor- Casimir, at 130 Rue Victor-Hugo, Saint-Pierre (which Dauprat – see below – who came to Martinique a few years later, cf. Merlhès 1984, p. 466, note 3, and 1989, p. 47, note 2 – visited), unless Gauguin was imprecise in his letters, and the two addresses are one and the same.

In Martinique, Laval works hard: 'The natives are infinitely picturesque, they offer all the picturesque one could desire. There's enough to observe and produce in a completely unprecedented vein for several artists' lives in succession…' (Merlhès XXXV, to Puigaudeau).

July
After five days' walking, Bernard reaches Loudéac, then Quimperlé and Pont-Aven (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, pp. 70-74).

Shortly before the end of July
Gauguin falls gravely ill with malaria complicated by dysentery and a hepatic attack; the illness, no doubt caught in Colón, first manifests itself in galloping anaemia, quickly reaching a crisis whose reiterated violence also has a powerful effect on his nerves (Merlhès, 1984, p. 464, note 228).

During the summer
At Étrépagny, Anquetin experiments with landscape seen through a door made up of pieces of glass in many colours; this contributes to his working out of a new style (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 229; Dujardin, 1888, p. 491). He paints his first radically new work, *Boat at Sunset*, which has since disappeared; Bernard described it as a 'big Japanese print' (Bernard, 1932, p. 594; 1903, p. 676). Towards the end of the summer, he paints *The Mower at Midday*, the first known Cloisonnist work (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 229).

That year
Thanks to Bracquemond, Delavallée meets Pissarro, Seurat and Signac, and becomes a remarkable Pointillist. According to Le Paul (1983, p. 235), he returns to Pont-Aven in 1887, there coming across Bernard, whom he had first met in 1886; however, Chassé (1965, p. 23) contradicts this.

Around 25 August
Gauguin writes to Mette: the 'doctor […] says that I absolutely *must* return to France or the liver malady and fevers will just go on for ever – […] Your letters were a pleasure yet very painful too, and at the moment the pain is unendurable – If we could at least hate each other […] I haven't the money to get back to France. I'm writing to Schuff to ask him to help me one last time as he has always done till now. I've had good news about my ceramics in the mail. It seems they're a success and though I can't be sure perhaps on my return the situation may be a bit brighter' (Merlhès 130). The source of this hope was Albert Dauprat, whom Charles' brother Nino Laval, his colleague on the journal *La Science sociale*, had taken to Chaplet's studio. Dauprat was thrilled by Gauguin's stoneware (he bought two vases), and was proposing to finance a partnership between Gauguin and Chaplet for the production of art pottery (Merlhès, 1984, p. 465, note 229 and Merlhès 131).
Meanwhile, Gauguin is 'skeletal' and 'suffering agonies'; he cannot understand why Schuffenecker has not written since his departure, nor why his old friend Favre expatiates and does nothing: 'You're standing on the bank, watching someone drown, proffering advice and no help, it's just typical, give it up' (Merlhès 132).

Back in Paris, Bernard quarrels with Signac (Letter B1, Vincent Van Gogh to Bernard, autumn 1887, according to Hulsker, 1993, p. 32).

2 September
Puigaudeau manages to avoid military service on the pretext of his immediately rejoining the École des beaux-arts, though he does not comply with this condition. As to his going to Martinique, Gauguin and Laval are thought to have written to dissuade him, recounting their misadventures (Laurentin, 1989, p. 25).
After this epistolary contact (the correspondence between Puigaudeau and his friends in Martinique has been lost), no further document relating to Gauguin mentions Puigaudeau (Merlhès, 1984, p. 450, note 218).

October
Gauguin realises that Laval and he have been unlucky in that a letter of recommendation from Henri Cottu, an administrator of the Compagnie du canal de Panama (no doubt an acquaintance of Mme Laval), has been delayed in the post; it would have made their lives easier (Merlhès, 1989, p. 70).
'I'm still ill […]. Despite that, I'm hobbling along just enough to make up for lost time and do some good paintings. I shall bring back a dozen pictures, including four with figures, much better than my Pont-Aven period' (Merlhès 133; cf. *Introduction* to Martinique).
Gauguin is oppressed by Mette's four-month silence, and does not know what to think of it: is she ill, or merely lacking in motivation, now that he is in Martinique where there is no chance of his earning anything? (Merlhès 134).

4 October
Ernest Chaplet cedes to his young colleague Auguste Delaherche (1857-1940) 'the lease of [Chaplet's] Rue Blomet studios, the existing kiln and rights to exploit [Chaplet's] stoneware production methods for his own advantage' (R. Marx: 'Auguste Delaherche', *Art et Décoration*, February 1906, pp. 54-55). Chaplet was intending to build a new kiln better suited to firing copper reds at Choisy-le-Roi (Merlhès, 1984, p. 469, note 235).

20 October
Ingeborg Gad legalizes her relationship with Edvard Brandes, Danish politician and writer (1847-1931). Shortly afterwards, Brandes convinces



Edvard Brandes, c. 1883, detail.
Photo: Copenhagen,
Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

the penurious Mette to cede Gauguin's Impressionist collection to him as security for a 6,000-crown loan, the collection to be returned when she reimburses him (Malingue CXLVIII, Gauguin to Mette, 5 February, 1894). Brandes failed to honour this agreement (Malingue CIL; cf. no. *44*).

Autumn
Bernard's parents move to a bigger house at 5 Avenue Beaulieu at Asnières that borders on the railway. His maternal grand-mother, now widowed, comes to live with them and has a studio built for Bernard (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 74): 'Van Gogh often came to see me in the wooden studio built in my parent's garden at Asnières. […] having quarrelled with my father, who was unwilling to accept his advice about my future, he was so furious [that] he departed without once looking back, and never darkened our door again'. Bernard hereafter goes to visit him at Rue Lepic (Bernard: preface to *Lettres de Vincent Van Gogh à Émile Bernard*, éd. Vollard, Paris, 1911, p. 12; Letter B1).



Émile Bernard and Vincent Van Gogh at Asnières, photo. Dated 1886 by Bernard, but very likely 1887. Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum.



Vincent Painting at Asnières, drawing by Émile Bernard, 1887 (from Tralbaut, 1969).



Sophie Bodin-Lallement (the artist's grandmother), painting by Émile Bernard, 1887, given to Vincent Van Gogh. Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum.

Autumn
Van Gogh has frequently been working with Bernard, perhaps since the



Vincent Van Gogh, autoportrait donné à Émile Bernard, 1887. Detroit (Michigan), The Detroit Institute of Arts.

end of the previous winter; at his initiative, they are preparing the Grand-Bouillon exhibition.

Probably around this time, Van Gogh exchanges a self-portrait (very likely F526) for Bernard's portrait of his grandmother (Letter 553).

Between 20 and 25 October (Merlhès, 1984, p. 468, note 234) Gauguin finally receives the FF 250 he has been requesting from Schuffenecker since late August, and can at last afford to return home, which he does by sail, probably arriving on the Atlantic coast of France.
He reaches Paris in the snow around **14 or 15 November** and again stays at 29 Rue Boulard: 'Fortunately, Schuffenecker is giving me board and lodging during the convalescence that I need' (Merlhès 136). Schuffenecker put him up for the next two and a half months. Gauguin is puzzled to learn that Chaplet has ceded his Vaugirard studio, thus torpedoing his hope of a partnership financed by Dauprat. He nevertheless undertakes a second pottery campaign during the winter of 1887-1888, this time at Delaherche's studio.
Certain of his works have gone missing: 'Tell me what you took just so I know whether I've been robbed', he asks Mette. He is still hoping to sell his Manet pastel, which has remained in Denmark (Merlhès 136).

Around November-December
An exhibition is presented at the Grand-Bouillon – the Restaurant du Chalet at 43 Avenue de Clichy. It shows works of a new kind, inspired by popular imagery (cf. no. *259*, inset). Bernard: 'To mark them off from the Impressionists, who had recently been brought into the *maison* Goupil on the *grands boulevards* by his brother [Theo] […] Vincent baptised this attractive new group "The *Petit-Boulevard* School"' (Bernard, 1903, pp. 678-679). Van Gogh seems to have intended this denomination to include a part of the Post-Impressionist avant-garde: 'The chief of the *Petit-Boulevard* is undoubtedly Seurat', he wrote (Letter 500, c. 5 June 1888), having been greatly impressed by a visit to Seurat's studio – 128bis Boulevard de Clichy – in February 1888 (Letters 544a, 553).
Bernard continues: 'A big popular restaurant had just opened on Avenue de Clichy. Vincent ate there. He suggested to the boss that they hold an exhibition […] Pictures by Anquetin – "Japanese abstractions" [including *Mower, Avenue de Clichy* and *Boat*], by Lautrec – "prostitutes", by one Koning (who has since vanished), and "geometric syntheses" by myself [including *Asnières Bridge*, *Rag and Bone Women-Clichy*, which we identify with no. 8 in *Bernard*, 12 May-4 November 1990, p. 127], completed by a multitude of Van Gogh sketches – "between fifty and a hundred works, including landscapes, still lifes (mainly of flowers) and flamboyant self-portraits" – covered the place. It looked really new, it was the newest thing around in Paris at the time' (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 28; Bernard, 1903, p. 678).
The Grand-Bouillon exhibition marked the advent of Cloisonnism (cf. *Chronology*, February-March 1888). Van Gogh's verdict: 'since Bernard sold his first painting there, Anquetin sold a study and I did a swap with Gauguin, we all got something out of it' (Letter 510).
Around late November or early December, Gauguin, probably with Guillaumin as his intermediary, approached Theo Van Gogh and his brother (the Gauguin text entitled *Les Crevettes roses*, dated 'Winter 86' [*Avant et après*, pp. 27-28], is an invention poetically accounting for their meeting, cf. Merlhès, 1984, p. 470, note 236).
Bernard is our witness that, like Pissarro, Guillaumin and Seurat, Gauguin visited the Grand-Bouillon exhibition (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 28), where he exchanged a Martinique painting (*Riverside, 252*) for two *Faded Sunflowers* by Van Gogh,



Theo Van Gogh, c. 1888-1889
(from Rewald, 1956).

F375 and F376 (Letter 510, 15 July 1888; Merlhès 1989, p. 56; Merlhès LVII).

December
Gauguin attempts to encourage Mette, who has been left penniless despite the promises of her family and friends, and sends her FF 100 from the sale of a pot to a sculptor. He assures her that he is likely soon to find an outlet for his ceramic works and that he has attracted the attention of a major art dealer: 'You know the Maison Goupil, publishers and art dealers; this company has now become the centre of the Impressionists. Little by little it is going to persuade its clientele to take us on board' (Merlhès 137). Gauguin is here referring to Theo Van Gogh, who, having once been converted by Vincent, worked constantly to obtain recognition for the Impressionists, devoting himself to the least popular among them (Merlhès, 1989, p. 55).
And, shortly afterwards, Gauguin can tell Mette: 'Sunday someone from Goupil came round who was very enthusiastic about my pictures and finally bought three paintings for FF 900 and will (he says) take more' (Merlhès 138).
'Whatever else they invent, there can be nothing better than harmony in the family', Gauguin opines, though he adds 'I enjoyed seeing you in April, but the points of character that make you difficult to live with were still the same, as I couldn't help noticing' (Merlhès 137). Later, Mette spoke in a letter to Schuffenecker of her 'awful trip to Paris' (1 April 1893, Loize archives, Musée Gauguin, Tahiti).

Schuffenecker generously looks after Gauguin, whose health is still unsatisfactory; he has regained weight, but still suffers 'unbearable pain in his gut' (Merlhès 137).

Laval stays a few more months in Martinique, no doubt with his family's financial assistance (Merlhès, 1984, p. 469, note 234).
In the course of the month, Gauguin receives from Laval a letter, dated **9 December**, admirably expressing the latter's profound gratitude and fraternal solidarity, praising Gauguin's generous, upright nature (Merlhès, 1989, pp. 51-54).

Still in December

Theo organises an exhibition of works by Gauguin, Pissarro and Guillaumin, taken from those on deposit with his gallery; it includes four Gauguin paintings (1885, 1886 and 1887) and five vases, which attract the attention of the critic Fénéon (January, 1888, p. 170). One Gauguin painting (*221*) is sold to the industrialist Dupuis for FF 450 (Huyghe sketchbook, p. 225; Bousod register in Rewald, 1973, p. 90).



Félix Fénéon, study drawing by Paul Signac, 1889-1890 (from Rewald, 1956).

Around this time

Gauguin makes the acquaintance of Georges-Daniel de Monfreid (14 March 1856-1929), a painter and sailor-peasant from the Pyrenees, who, from 1891 on, became Gauguin's most loyal friend (*Georges-Daniel de Monfreid*, Paris, galerie Jaubert, 6 May-4 June 1976, no page nos.). De Monfreid later said: 'I met Gauguin only after his return from Martinique, when he was living with his friend Schuffenecker, one of my companions



Self-Portrait by Georges-Daniel de Monfreid, 1889.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

from the *atelier* Colarossi. Counselled by the potter Chaplet [in fact, Chaplet had already left for Choisy-le-Roi], he was then experimenting with moulded pieces, stoneware-baking them in a very hot kiln' (De Monfreid, December 1903, p. 266).

1888

Pissarro begins to distance himself from Divisionism.

Durand-Ruel opens a gallery in New York (Venturi, 1939, vol. I, p. 82).

Early in the year

Maurice Denis enters the *académie* Julian (cf. M. Denis, in Sérusier, 1942, p. 40). There he meets Sérusier, who



Self-Portrait, pencil drawing by Maurice Denis, July 1888.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

teaches him about the doctrines of Plotinus (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 376; M. Denis, in Chassé, 1955, pp. 126-127).

4 January

A receipt testifies that Theo Van Gogh and his colleague Michel Manzi have each bought a painting by Gauguin (Merlhès, 1989, p. 57).
According to Merlhès (1984, p. 472, note 238), Rotonchamp is right to say (1906, republ. 1925, p. 177) that, 'as early as 1888 [in fact, in January of that year only], Gauguin began teaching in an *atelier libre*, which had been opened in the impasse du Maine [no. 18] by a London businessman named Rawlins. Gauguin shared the management of the studio – inevitably – with the painter François Flameng [an academic painter who had won a



The painter François Flameng. Photo: BNF.

prize at the 1879 Salon], but visited the students only two or three times, since the rent remained unpaid and the studio was closed'. (Gauguin refers briefly to this episode in Segalen LIV, May 1899).
Mette, mollified by Gauguin's improving financial prospects, suggests that he join the family on a Danish seaside holiday. Gauguin replies: 'it would be dangerous for me to have my children at my side and then up and go. You must remember that there are two natures in me, the Indian and the sensitive – The latter has disappeared, allowing the Indian to march resolutely on' (Merlhès 139).
He suggests that Mette translate into French a book by Bjørnson, which is supposed to have shaken Scandinavian opinion by advocating free love (Merlhès, 1984, p. 473, note 240, and Merlhès 139).

During January

Anquetin shows his new style of painting at an avant-garde exhibition on the premises of *La Revue indépendante* (Fénéon: 'Exposition de La Revue indépendante', *La Revue indépendante*, January 1888, p. 173).

17 January

Bernard writes to Aurier, suggesting that he take part in a publication that is to include not only lithographs by artists such as Gauguin, Pissarro, Degas and Bernard himself, but his own poems (unpublished letter, Aurier archives, cited in Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 53).



Louis Anquetin dressed as a carter. Detail of a photo, 1889.
Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec.

Probably by Thursday 26 January

Coffers refilled, Gauguin, having neither 'studio nor model' in Paris, leaves for Pont-Aven in order to 'work for 7-8 months on end soaking up the character of the people and the country, which is essential if you want to paint anything good' (Merlhès 139).
He returns to the *Pension Gloanec*, occupying a little room on the first floor, which also serves as his studio (cf. Jourdan, in Tuarze, 1973, p. 103).

Around January or February

Bernard sees some of Gauguin's Martinique paintings at the Van Gogh brothers' flat, and is very impressed by a large-format picture (*Mangoes, 250*; Bernard, 1904, p. 8).

February

Gauguin's health is bad. He finds Pont-Aven deserted by its summer population but more authentic: 'Since I got here, I've been in bed almost all the time […] Not a soul to discuss things with' (Merlhès 140). 'I just go on living in dumb contemplation of nature wholly wrapped up in my art. […] That's how I find the strength to go on living and don't even feel too bitter about my fellow man. Thinking about the future just makes me anxious and depletes my energy. […] I work when I'm up', he tells Schuffenecker on 20 February (Merlhès, 1989, p. 61).

19 February

Shortly after meeting Seurat for the first time, on a visit to the latter's studio with Theo (Letters 544a, 553), Vincent Van Gogh leaves Paris for Arles, where he arrives on 20 February (Merlhès, 1984, p. 473, note 241). He stays at the restaurant Carrel, 30 Rue Amédée-Pichot (Rue de la Cavalerie till 1886).

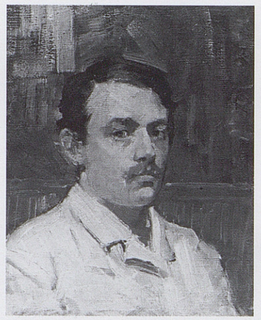


The hôtel-restaurant Carrel where Van Gogh stayed on arrival in Arles (from Tralbaut, 1969).

Anquetin's works are exhibited **February-March** at the Salon des Vingt in Brussels, then **March-May** at the Salon des indépendants in Paris. Dujardin defines Anquetin as 'Cloisonnist' (1888, pp. 487-492), while the Belgian critic L. describes him as 'pseudo-Japanese' in tendency and 'incendiary' in his colours (1888, p. 68).

Late February

'In funds' for a month at most, Gauguin writes to Vincent asking that



Self-Portrait by John Russel, c. 1886.
Morlaix, Musée des Jacobins.

Theo do his best to find buyers for him, even 'cut-price' ones (Merlhès 142).
On receipt of this letter, Vincent contacts John Russell (1858-1930/31), a dilettante painter and son of a rich Australian industrialist, whom he had befriended at the *atelier* Cormon (Merlhès, 1984, p. 474, note 242); he also suggests that Theo buy a Gauguin seascape on his own account (Letter 466).

An anonymous article in *L'Union agricole et maritime de Quimperlé* (1888, p. 3) testifies to Granchi-Taylor's presence in Pont-Aven **by early March**; he is preparing his entries for the Salon.

March

Vincent Van Gogh draws up a plan for the survival of the Petit-Boulevard group and followers. Even this first plan is very Utopian (Merlhès 1984, pp. 475-477, note 244).

The *Marsouin* sends Gauguin the *faire-part* of his marriage to Gabrielle Tessier, which is celebrated on 8 March in the mairie of the 5th arrondissement (cf. no. *147*).

Around 14-16 March

Gauguin tells Van Gogh (Merlhès 143): 'money worries are the only ones that affect me […] – Pont-Aven is currently very gloomy because of the bad weather wind and continuous rain and I'm waiting for fine weather in order to get back to work which I have rather given up because of illness'. Moreover, he cannot afford to pay for models (Merlhès 144, 145).

18 March

First letter from Van Gogh to Bernard, the start of a sustained and intense correspondence.

26 March

Gauguin receives FF 50 from Schuffenecker (Merlhès 144).
His presence in Pont-Aven is noted by the local press: 'Amongst our guests there is also Monsieur Gaugain* who occupies one of the foremost places in the Impressionist school' (*L'Union agricole et maritime de Quimperlé*, 1888, p. 3).

Jourdan discovers Pont-Aven **probably in late winter 1887-1888**: 'I arrived a month after Gauguin…'; 'he would go out when the weather was fine with easel and canvases tied to his back and



Pierre Puvis de Chavannes in his studio, place Pigalle, photographed by Émile Bernard, c. 1884-1887.
Émile Bernard Archives.

13 August-4 December 1887
Ninth and last exhibition of the Union centrale des arts décoratifs at the palais de l'Industrie. Chaplet and Delaherche are represented (Merlhès, 1984, p. 443, note 212). A room devoted to China and Japan presents Bing's collections (P. Lefort: 'Exposition des Arts décoratifs', *GBA*, 1 November 1887, pp. 363-366).

November
Pierre Loti: *Madame Chrysanthème*.

20 November-20 December
Sole exhibition of the year at Durand-Ruel's gallery: 84 'Paintings, Pastels and Drawings' by Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898) (Venturi, 1939, vol. I, p. 82).

December 1887-January 1888
At the Bernheim-Jeune gallery, a major exhibition of Japanese art, with prints from the collections of Messrs. Bing, Burty, Cernuschi and Gonse (*Bernard*, 12 May-4 November 1990, p. 98).
Puvis is commissioned to paint the Sorbonne frescoes.
Antoine founds the Théâtre libre.
Guy de Maupassant: *Le Horla*.
The Sacré Coeur is completed.

1888

27 March
Carnot removes General Boulanger from the army list, thus rendering him electable.

April-August
Boulanger has himself elected in various départements, in each case gathering not only the conservative but the radical and socialist vote too.

7 November
The trial of Prado begins. He is accused of a sordid murder; despite the lack of proof, he is condemned to death on **19 November** (Merlhès, 1989, pp. 210-211).

December
First Russian loan on the Paris stock-market is a triumphant success.

28 December
Execution of Prado.

January
Degas exhibition at the Durand-Ruel gallery.
Seurat completes *Women Posing* and *Parade*.

25 May-25 June
Exhibition at Durand-Ruel's gallery (11 rue Le Peletier) of paintings, gouaches, and pastels by Sisley, Renoir, Lépine, Whistler, Berthe Morisot, Boudin, Brown, Caillebotte, Pissarro, and a collection of etchings by Whistler (Merlhès, 1984, p. 483, note 253).

May to August
International exhibition at Copenhagen (Merlhès, 1984, p. 214). Solo exhibitions at *La Revue indépendante* for Manet, Guillaumin, etc. (Merlhès 1984, p. 512, note 299).



19 April, General Boulanger Returns from the Palais-Bourbon, drawing *in situ* by P. Destez. Photo: BNF.

wander off into the countryside… he never said a word to anyone' (Tuarze, 1973, p. 101). True, Delavallée claims that Jourdan was in Pont-Aven in **1886** (Chassé, 1955, p. 47), but if he is mistaken as to year, this would not be the only case, and Jourdan's account is the more plausible.
Jourdan takes up the story: 'When I arrived in Pont-Aven, people sent me to the Gloanec hotel […]. [When] I introduced myself, Gauguin coldly acknowledged me, assuming that I was a Salon artist from Paris, and he didn't like the *salonneux* at all. Then he went on with his work, without more ado. […] I must say that, a few days later, we were good friends and remained on excellent terms till he left the country. He was surrounded by young painters he was training up, who were influenced by him or simply admired him. This was when I met Émile Bernard in his company' (Tual, 1925, p. 1). These latter sentences can only refer to the height of the summer of 1888, when academics and Impressionists ate at separate tables (see below), whereas, according to Jourdan – as he later told Delavallée – this was not the case when he first discovered Pont-Aven (Chassé, 1955, p. 47). Jourdan at this point settled in Pont-Aven, leaving it only for a short visit to Algeria – unless he had visited that country in 1883 (J.-M. Cusinberche, trilingual exhibition catalogue *Gauguin and His Painter Friends in Brittany*, no place of publication) –and a short trip to Finland (Jaworska, 1971, p. 208).

Early April (and not 27 April, cf. Merlhès, 1989, p. 64, note 1): **Bad weather and inability to pay for models are preventing Gauguin from working, though he has now, he feels, recovered from his illness.**
'Laval's brother [Nino] is here for two months and we're talking literature' (Gauguin to Schuffenecker, 27 April 1888, partially published in Merlhès 145, sale Sotheby's Parke-Bernet, London, 26-27 November 1980, no. 191).
Schuffenecker takes the competitive exam for the right to teach drawing in universities; he learns **late in the month** that he has failed (*Bulletin administratif du ministère de l'Éducation nationale*, 21 January 1888, in Merlhès, 1989, pp. 63-64).

Since late 1887, Theo Van Gogh has been showing (in rotation, and alongside the works of other artists), some of the Gauguin works left on deposit with the gallery in January and April. These are noticed by Fénéon in his 'Calendrier' in *La Revue indépendante* (February 1888, pp. 306-309; May 1888, pp. 382-383).

Late April
Bernard treks in Brittany as far as Saint-Briac, where he stays for three months (*Bernard*, 12 May-4 November 1990, p. 98; *L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 75).

Late April or early May
Theo Van Gogh visits Brussels (Merlhès, 1989, pp. 64-66).

Before early May
Vincent Van Gogh rents a little yellow house at 2 place Lamartine in Arles and immediately envisages sharing it with another painter (Letter 480, 30 April/1 May; Merlhès 1984, p. 481, note 249).

May-June
Guillaumin's first solo exhibition takes place at *La Revue indépendante*, 11 Rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin (Merlhès 1989, p. 137).

At the Salon, Granchi-Taylor exhibits as a pupil of Cormon, giving his address as 87 Rue des Moines, Les Batignolles (Salon brochure).
In Paris, he spends time with John Russell, who claims to admire Gauguin greatly (and had, according to Van Gogh, cf. Letter 623a, late January 1890, met him). Despite his wealth, Russell never bought a Gauguin (Merlhès 158).

Sérusier is accepted for the Salon (Guicheteau-Boutaric, 1976, p. 161).

Around 20 May
In a letter to Bernard, Van Gogh, commenting on a book on the Marquesas, condemns the role of Western colonisation in Polynesia (Letter B5).

22 May
Gauguin finally asks Theo Van Gogh for help: 'For three months, I've been boarding here on credit; this state of things is deeply embarrassing. Yet I was fairly confident when I left you […] that I had enough to [be able to live and] work modestly' (Merlhès 146).

In the Spring, Gauguin frequents the Lézaven studios where he paints a number of pictures (cf. no. *279*, inset on Lézaven).


The Lézaven studio.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

28-29 May
Van Gogh drafts a letter to Gauguin proposing that they work and live together subsidized by Theo, and that this arrangement should be open to other 'Impressionists' such as Bernard: this is the germ of his 'studio in the south' idea (Letter 494a).

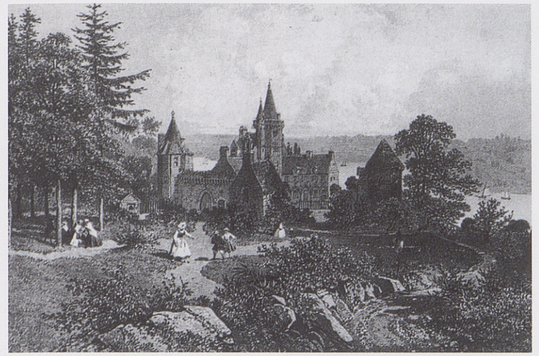
June
Schuffenecker covets Gauguin's Cézanne (this is no doubt *Fruit Dish, Glass and Apples*, which Gauguin later included in the backdrop of W387). Despite his penury, Gauguin will not sell this 'exceptional pearl'.
In the first week of June, Gauguin receives FF 50 advance from Theo on


Ernest Ponthier de Chamaillard, c. 1889-1891, detail.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

a drawing. He is 'very touched by this' (Letter 496, Merlhès 149).
To Theo's mention of Vincent's plan (Merlhès XL, see above), Gauguin replies with another plan: to set Theo up as a dealer in Impressionism thanks to FF 500,000 capital supplied by Dauprat or Cottu (Merlhès, 1989, p. 70; Letter 496).
The banker Mirtil has been demanding the return of the FF 300 that he lent Gauguin in July 1886. Gauguin considers repaying Mirtil by letting him choose one of his pictures at Theo's gallery (Merlhès 149); Mirtil does this in **October** (Merlhès 175; cf. *Lollichon Field and Pont-Aven Church, 225*).
Gauguin's health remains unstable (Merlhès 149).

Around 10 June
Gauguin receives Van Gogh's invitation to come to Arles to set up an association of painters selling their own work (cf. Letter 494, c. 5 June); Gauguin all but accepts, while setting forth his own idea (cf. Letter 498, c. 15 June; Letter 535a, c. 14-16 June). Shortly afterwards, he tells Schuffenecker that he wants to be in Paris at all costs at the end of the year in order to attempt to realise this very ambitious project (Merlhès, 1989, pp. 68-71).
Meanwhile, he is hoping that one Mme Poujin, a contact of Schuffenecker's, will soon decide to buy a Martinique painting, so that he can settle his debts at the Pension Gloanec (Merlhès 149, 153; Merlhès, 1984, p. 488, note 260; cf. *Tropics*, no. *251*).
His relations with Mette are somewhat attenuated: 'Not for the first time in our married life your letters are anything but an exchange of thoughts and feelings and I'm beginning to weary of writing without there ever being the least response'. Yet Mette had remembered his birthday, saying she was worried about him. The children have been invited to spend their holidays by the sea, which is fortunate, as in the summer she has little or no work (Merlhès 154).

June
De Chamaillard, who had begun painting only recently, is at an auction in the château du Hénan near Pont-Aven, when he notices a man with 'torso sculpted by a sailor's jumper, wearing a beret and extraordinary carved clogs. I was astonished to see a man of such superb bearing greet my


The Château du Hénan near Pont-Aven, c. 1860-1864, lithograph.
Quimper, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

friends and asked them who this remarkable personage was. They told me that he was a painter of great and original talent, so original indeed that it was difficult to understand'. De Chamaillard immediately became a friend and pupil of Gauguin's (Salmon, 1925, p. 15).
De Chamaillard was then courting Louise Lamour, the youngest niece of the principal postmistress of Pont-Aven, Mlle Baton (Le Bihan, 1978, p. 122), who lived above the post-office on Rue du Gac, now 15 Rue du Général-de-Gaulle (Le Paul, 1983, p. 260).
The attic of this house, arranged as a studio, was, over the course of that summer, a place where Gauguin and Bernard in particular met to discuss and paint together; according to Le Paul (1983, p. 262) and Thuars (November 1957, p. 3), works by Bernard and Gauguin were still to be found there in 1935.

Late June
Gauguin accepts the Van Gogh brothers' proposal: one picture consigned to Theo per month in exchange for FF 250 to be shared with Vincent (Letter 493, c. 28 May; Merlhès 156). Strangely enough, Vincent is at this point thinking of coming to join them in Brittany, where life is much cheaper (Letter 507, 29 June).

Vincent encourages Bernard to meet Gauguin: 'Gauguin's bored in Pont-Aven, he complains of isolation just as you do. Why not go and see him!' (Letter B7, c. 18 June).

That year, Moret is staying at Pont-Aven: 'A solitary man, completely without ambition, […] an excellent swimmer and a fencer of great stamina. […] the gentlest, kindest, most


Henry Moret. Photo: Durand-Ruel Archives.

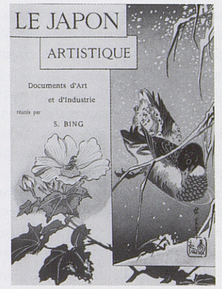
generous of men, the best of men' (Maurice, 1937, pp. 24-37). In **June**, he rents one of the studios in route de Concarneau (now 36 Rue Émile-Bernard) in the converted attic of René-Jean Kerluen (1843-1925), a retired naval officer who had become Pont-Aven harbour master in 1880. He was a 'fencing master with a diploma from the famous school at Joinville-Le-Pont' and had had a fencing-school set up on the ground floor of his house for the custom of rich foreign painters (Thuars, July 1957, p. 3). **Thanks to the advice of Gauguin, who no doubt had a justified reputation as a swordsman (Hartrick, 1939, p. 31), Kerluen became an 'excellent [fencing] teacher' (*Avant et après*, p. 133). Gauguin moreover took his first boxing lessons in Pont-**Aven (in 1886 or 1888) with the painter Bouffard (*Avant et après*, p. 136).
According to Thuars (July 1957, pp. 4-5), Kerluen's attic soon became a centre for the creative exuberance of the group around Gauguin and Bernard, and many paintings were left there in lieu of rent.


René-Jean Kerluen in Fencing Costume, painting by Henry Moret, 1892.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.


Kerluen in old age.
Photo: Musée de Pont-Aven.

July
Despite some relapses, Gauguin's health was now improving and was excellent by the end of the month (Merlhès 156, 158).
This was a period when his experiments began to advance in leaps and bounds (cf. no. *291*): 'in my most recent studies, I feel I've gone beyond anything I've done till now – Of course, the gang of boors here think I'm completely round the bend and that keeps me happy' (Merlhès 158).

During the summer of 1888
Delavallée – despite what he told Chassé in 1932 (1965, p. 23) – is probably staying in Pont-Aven (cf. below).





Cover and title page of the first number of *Le Japon artistique*, which appeared in May 1888.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

28 May 1888
In his gallery at 22 rue de Provence, Samuel Bing opens a 'Historic exhibition of the art of engraving in Japan' ('Informations', *Moniteur des arts*, 1 June 1888, p. 187), and founds a sumptuous magazine, *Le Japon artistique, documents d'art et d'industrie* (36 numbers from May 1888 to April 1891).

June-July
Monet signs an agreement with Goupil and exhibits some ten paintings at Theo Van Gogh's gallery on boulevard Montmartre, one of which is sold for FF 3,000, Monet's standard price (Merlhès, 1984, p. 483, note 253).

6 June
Opening at the musée du Louvre of a room displaying the discoveries made by Marcel Dieulafoy at Susa in Iran (Merlhès, 1984, p. 505, notule 1).

15 July
Twelfth and last number of *La Revue wagnérienne*.

July-August
Solo exhibition of M. Luce at the *Revue indépendante* (Merlhès, 1989, p. 137).

September-October
Solo exhibition of Albert Dubois-Pillet at the *Revue indépendante* (Merlhès, 1989, p. 137).
Charles Henry: *Cercle chromatique*.
Rodin: *The Burghers of Calais*.
Dunlop (France) invents the inner tube.
Opening of the Institut Pasteur.
Construction of the Eiffel Tower.

Jourdan is still staying at the Pension Gloanec during the **summer of 1888** and forms part of the group around Gauguin (Chassé, 1965, p. 28; cf. above). The Jourdan who sits at the academics' table, mentioned by Madeleine Bernard in October (letter to Émile, original in the PSU), is probably not the same man.
Sérusier spends **part of the summer of 1888** at Concarneau; his parents come to join him there in late July (Guicheteau-Boutaric, 1976, p. 18, note 14).



G.-Albert Aurier (from Rewald, 1956).

Though in *L'Aventure de ma vie* (pp. 69-70) Bernard implies that he met the writer and art critic Albert Aurier (1865-1892) at Saint-Énogat near Saint-Briac in the summer of 1887 – he was writing to him by January 1888 – Julien Leclercq states categorically that this meeting took place in **summer 1888** ('Albert Aurier', *Les Essais d'art libre*, November 1892, p. 203). In 1895, Bernard too took this line: 'the frescoes and painted glass that had attracted the poet Aurier were entirely my work. It was a year later that I introduced Aurier to Gauguin' (Bernard, 1895, p. 334). That meeting did indeed take place in 1889. Moreover, in *L'Aventure de ma vie* (p. 70), he describes time spent in Brittany reading, with Aurier, letters sent by Van Gogh from Arles; this must have been in 1888.

July

Maurice Denis enters the École des beaux-arts (Welsh-Ovcharov, 1981, p. 376), and works in Gustave Moreau's studio.
Van Gogh again approaches Russell about buying a work of Gauguin's, and suggests that Theo negotiate on his and Gauguin's behalf with the dealer Georges Thomas (Merlhès, 1984, pp. 482, note 251, 489, note 262, 490, note 264).
On **15 July** Van Gogh sends Bernard some pen-and-ink drawings, hoping for an exchange (Letter B10), and Bernard reciprocates on **23 July** (Letter B12).

Probably early in the second fortnight of July

Gauguin is away from Pont-Aven (Merlhès, 1984, p. 490, note 264) and two seascapes attest to a trip to the coast (cf. no. *288* and no. *289*). He may have made an excursion to Le Pouldu. The tradition is that he went in the boat of his new friend



Captain Jacob, in mufti, detail. Photo: Musée de Pont-Aven.

Yves-Marie Jacob (1 July 1851-30 December 1908), who had been Captain of Customs since February 1887. Jacob knew the West Indies and enjoyed the company of artists (cf. no. *306*; cf. Sérusier in Chassé, 1921, p. 23). Or had Jacob invited Gauguin to spend a week at Plestin-les-Grèves? There, according to Joseph Jacob, the Captain's younger brother, Gauguin painted the chapel of Sainte-Barbe (Chassé, 1955, p. 65, note 1).

Around 24 or 25 July

Laval joins Gauguin at Pont-Aven: 'My friend Laval has returned from Martinique; he's brought back some very curious watercolours' (Merlhès 158).

Around the end of July

Granchi is back in Pont-Aven, and his quarrel with Gauguin seems already to have been smoothed over (Merlhès 158); however, according to Granchi, their reconciliation did not take place until 1894 (letter to C. Reitz, 6 February 1920; cf. no. *205*).

Mid-August

Gauguin is still waiting for money to come in so that he can join Van Gogh in the south. He is occupying a studio right at the top of the Gloanec, and sleeping on a pallet, according to Bernard (1939, p. 9).
'I've begun a student who'll do well; the band's growing' (Merlhès 159); indeed, a whole group of disciples is forming around Gauguin. His 'pupil' De Chamaillard tells us that Gauguin used to say: '"You love your art, that's all that's required". On this basis, he gathered round him all the young painters arriving in Pont-Aven, to whom he strove to impart his ardent faith' (Salmon, 1925, p. 16).

'In 1888, while Gauguin was at Pont-Aven with Laval, Moret and myself, he announced the arrival of a very young painter named Bernard, whose early efforts he liked, and from whom he was expecting great things in art', De Chamaillard recounts (letter to Morice, in Morice, 1906, p. 637).

Strongly encouraged by Van Gogh (Letter B7, 15-17 June 1888), Bernard, then aged twenty, arrives at Pont-Aven shortly before 14 August (Letter 523): 'I approached Gauguin, who this time received me cordially' (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 75). De Chamaillard later described his first contact with Bernard: 'At the time, he was, I can tell you, a very small boy, who hadn't the slightest claim to pose as Gauguin's rival, let alone his teacher' (Letter to Morice, in Morice, 1906, p. 637).
'Young Bernard is here', Gauguin immediately reported (Merlhès 159, 14 August), 'and he's brought interesting things back from Saint-Briac. There's a fellow who's not afraid of anything'. He told Van Gogh: 'I'm studying young Bernard, who you know better than I do: I think you'll do him good, and he needs it. He has, obviously, suffered and is setting out in life full of gall and very much inclined to see the bad side of mankind. I hope that with his intelligence and his love of art, he will one day perceive that goodness is a strength in relation to others and a consolation for one's own unhappiness. He loves and admires you, so you can have a good influence on him' (Merlhès 163).
For Bernard and Gauguin, it was a time of rapid development, in which Van Gogh's letters, full of his intellectual, mystical and idealistic ideas about art and the place of the artist, played an essential role: Van Gogh wrote thirteen letters to Bernard between March and August 1888, and eleven letters to Gauguin (now lost) between late May and September (cf. *Introductions* to Pont-Aven 1888).

Bernard, staying at the Gloanec, was joined shortly afterwards by his mother and his sister Madeleine, who was



Madeleine Bernard, painting by Émile Bernard, 1888. Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec.

then seventeen years old and 'very beautiful and very mystical' (Bernard, 1939, p. 11). Her beauty, her artist's soul and her spiritual charisma gave her the status of a muse among the painters, and drew the admiration of both Gauguin and Laval. She later became engaged to Laval, less out of love than compassion (cf. no. *305*).

The arrival of Bernard and his new works marked the beginning of a period of intense and fruitful collaboration (see *Introduction* to Pont-Aven, 1888, 2nd period). Gauguin 'speaks highly of Bernard's work and B. of Gauguin's', Van Gogh noted (Letter 526, to Theo, c. 21-23 August).
'My most recent works are making good progress and I think you will find […] an affirmation of my previous experiments the synthesis of a form and a colour with only the dominant [colour] considered', Gauguin told Schuffenecker (Merlhès 159).
This was probably a reference to the still life *Fête Gloanec (301)*, signed 'Madeleine B'. in order to foil the ferocious reaction of the academic painters (cf. Marie-Jeanne Gloanec, quoted in Denis, 1934, p. 169).
Sérusier, who arrived in Pont-Aven a month later, testifies as follows: 'the revolutionaries […] took their meals by themselves in a little side-room and the orthodox painters took care not to be seen with these pariahs. Gustave de Maupassant sat at the big table; [the father of Guy, the writer, he] was the most virulent of those who objected when the landlady suggested putting some Gauguins up on the wall' (Chassé, 1955, pp. 50-51).
Gauguin sends Mette and the children a portrait photo taken by an amateur (Merlhès 161), which corroborates the impression he had made on Hartrick two years earlier



The Painter Gustave de Maupassant (father of the novelist), painting by H. Bellangé. Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts et de la Céramique. Photo: Didier Tragin/Catherine Lancien.



Paul Gauguin photographed by an amateur at Pont-Aven, summer of 1888. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

(1939, p. 31): 'Tall, dark-haired and swarthy of skin, heavy of eyelid and with handsome features, all combined with a powerful figure, Gauguin was at this time a fine figure of a man. […] He dressed like a Breton fisherman in a blue jersey and wore a beret jauntily on the side of his head./ In a manner [*sic*], he was self-contained and confident, silent and almost dour, though he could unbend and be quite charming when he liked. […] the most reckless took no liberties with his person'.

Around mid-August

Schuffenecker is on holiday with his family, staying at Mme Dalibert's, Rue aux Planches at Yport, Seine-Maritime (Merlhès 159).

Around 18 August

Van Gogh decides to move into the little yellow house and asks Theo for the wherewithal to purchase two beds (Letter 523).
'In the hope of living in a studio of ours with G., I should like to make a decoration for the studio. Nothing but big sunflowers […] Anyhow if I carry out my plan there'll be a dozen panels. That way the whole thing will be a symphony in blue and yellow' (Letter 526, c. 21 August). Elsewhere, he speaks of 'decorating the studio this time with half a dozen *Sunflowers*, a decoration in which the pure or broken chrome yellows will be radiant on the blue […] backgrounds' (Letter B15, to Bernard, c. 18 August). Van Gogh eventually painted four: F454, F453, F456, F459 (according to Hulsker, 1980); and in January 1889, he made a copy of F454 for Gauguin – probably F458 (Letters 573, 574).

After mid-August and on into September

Gauguin makes brief excursions to Le Pouldu and the area around it – to the Porsac'h cliffs and Portguerrec creek, where he found motifs – and to Port-Manec'h in the Aven estuary. There, according to an unpublished Bernard letter (September 1892, to his mother, in the Musée départemental Maurice Denis 'Le Prieuré', manuscript 671), he painted Madeleine amidst the kelp on Saint-Nicholas beach (unknown work, cf. no. *305*).

Early September

'I'm working and doing nothing in the sense that I'm drawing with hand head and heart in the light of what I want to do later', Gauguin writes (Merlhès 163).

Around 12 September

Vincent writes to Theo Van Gogh: 'My letter to Gauguin has gone, I asked them for an exchange if they are willing, I should so like to have Gauguin's portrait of Bernard and Bernard's portrait of Gauguin here' (Letter 535).
'Bernard – his letter is imbued with veneration for Gauguin's talent – he says that he finds [Gauguin] such a great artist that he's almost afraid of him and finds everything that he, Bernard, does bad in comparison with Gauguin. And you know that this winter Bernard was still trying to pick a quarrel with Gauguin […] But he said that he dare not do Gauguin as I'd asked because he feels too shy of Gauguin', Vincent tells Theo Van Gogh (Letter 539, 17-18 September).

16 or 17 September

Vincent spends the night in the yellow house for the first time (Letter 538).

Gauguin is waiting to receive a reply from Dauprat through Nino Laval concerning the plan he has submitted to Dauprat, and expecting news of the sale of two paintings, which would allow him to help Charles Laval, who is completely penniless. Gauguin attempts to defend Laval's qualities as an artist to Nino, who is uncertain of his brother's moral fibre (Merlhès 164, cf. no. *238* and inset). Yet hope returns: 'Laval is expecting to come and join me in the south around February. He's found someone who'll give him FF 150 a month for a year' (according to Merlhès, this was Dauprat; Merlhès 165).



The 'little yellow house' in Arles. Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

Around 25-27 September

Gauguin replies to Van Gogh, telling him that he is not yet ready to do a portrait of Bernard. He has just finished (shortly after the Grand Pardon of Pont-Aven, which takes place on **the third Sunday in September** – that year, the 16th) the *Vision of the Sermon* (Merlhès 165, cf. no. *308*).
In **September**, in a wave of intense creativity, Gauguin and Bernard together bring into being a new artistic conception: 'I lived alongside [Gauguin] throughout the summer of 1888, we spent all our time together. Our work was, at this time, made almost in common', Bernard remembered (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, p. 78). His *Breton Women in the Meadow* was followed by Gauguin's *Vision of the Sermon*. Gauguin wished to present the latter to the Pont-Aven



Nizon church, near Pont-Aven (from Leprohon, 1975).

church, but 'of course, they don't want it' (Merlhès 165). 'Then we left for Nizon', Sérusier recounts (cf. below). Nizon is a village overlooking Pont-Aven, with a very old and austere church, decorated, as Bernard tells us, with naïve saints and bizarre monsters. Bernard takes up the story: 'Laval and I had brought the picture; [the] old priest […] looked at the

painting, which terrified him. […]Mortified, we carried the painting back to Pont-Aven, for the greater glory of Gauguin [as it happened], because it was this painting that did most, in Paris, to repute him the creator of symbolism' (*L'Aventure de ma vie*, pp. 77-78; cf. no. *308*, **D**, 1904).

'I first met Paul Gauguin in 1888 at Pont-Aven. He was accompanied by Charles Laval, H. Moret, Émile Bernard and E. de Chamaillard', Sérusier noted in a letter to Chassé (1920, in *ABC*, 1950, p. 153). Arriving in **September**, Sérusier came into contact with Gauguin thanks to Bernard (according to Dr. Palaux, manuscript, no date, p. 3). Sérusier claims to have joined them on the trip to present the *Vision* to Nizon parish priest (cf. Sérusier, in Chassé, 1921, p. 25).

An anecdote reported by Delavallée – who seems to be mistaken in his dates: the episode must surely belong in 1888 – spotlights another aspect of Gauguin's personality: 'He was very proud, a little naïve, and quite a hoaxer, very much the art-student, very deadpan. In 1886, he had made terrible fun of a slightly mad woman who was staying at the Gloanec for a while. He set up a whole scene in the Bois d'Amour and made the woman think that she was being prosecuted for indecent behaviour. She was summonsed to my studio, which had been decorated with auction posters to make it look more solemn. Gauguin was dressed up in a black shirt and claimed to be the Justice of the Peace. For this occasion, he



Captain Yves-Marie Jacob in his customs-officer's uniform.
Photo: Musée de Pont-Aven.

shaved off his moustache. Another day, he had the woman put on a man's evening dress and then tried to persuade her that she was the President of France' (Chassé, 1955, p. 46). Only Captain Jacob's intervention with the Prefect – no doubt in connection with this business – saved Gauguin from prosecution (cf. Joseph Jacob's letter in Chassé, 1955, p. 65; cf. no. *306*). Gauguin informs Van Gogh that he will be ready and willing, once his debts are paid, to realise Van Gogh's projected studio in the south, with the help of Laval and Bernard, who were expecting to come in February (Merlhès 165, Letter 544).
But Van Gogh specifies that, if Bernard is expecting to come and spend the winter in Arles, he will not receive the same financial treatment as Gauguin (Letters 538, 538a, B16).

Early October
Moret, Laval, De Chamaillard – and Bernard again – offer to exchange studies or portraits with Van Gogh, and say that they hope to join him (Letter 553a, 3 October; Letter 553, 14 October).

Around early October
Schuffenecker returns to Paris (Merlhès 168).

1 October
Gauguin, responding indirectly to Van Gogh's request, sends him a self-portrait (*Les Misérables, 309*), which he is to accept 'swap or no swap' (Merlhès 166).
Bernard at the same time sends his own self-portrait (Letter B19).

3 October
Van Gogh writes to Gauguin: 'I've made a decoration expressly for the room you'll be living in: the poet's garden […] you'll see […] perhaps I thought of you, while preparing your studio with the greatest excitement' (Letter 553a). According to letters 541, 552 and 556, the four pictures of the '*Poet's Garden* which forms the decoration of Gauguin's room' were F468, a lost work (known only through the drawing F1465), F479 and F485. Subsequently, Van Gogh added two studies of falling leaves: F486 and F487 (Letter B19).
He is delighted to have stimulated Gauguin to produce the self-portrait *Les Misérables (309)*, which Gauguin describes to him as a harrowing expression of the artist's condition (Merlhès 166). In his exaltation, Vincent tells Theo: 'As regards the communal life of several artists, I stipulate for an abbot to order things, and of course this will be Gauguin. […] You know if we have Gauguin, this will be a really important thing for us, it will mark a new era. […] You can stay with Goupil or not, it makes no difference, you'll stand solidly behind Gauguin and his followers. And in this way you'll be […] the first dealer-apostle. […] I'm confident that this union will be our bulwark against the vagaries of money and health' (Letter 544).
Van Gogh has painted his own self-portrait, 'a bonze a simple votary of the eternal Buddha', in expectation of this exchange (Letter 553a: F476).

Around 4 October
Responding to his friends in Brittany, Van Gogh sends seven works (Letter B18; Letter 553, 14 October).

Around 5-7 October
Vincent receives Gauguin's self-portrait: 'Gauguin seems ill and tortured in his portrait!! Wait though it won't last' (Letter 545).

7 or 8 October
Gauguin writes to Theo telling him that a return of his dysentery has kept him in bed for a week, brought on 'by the cold and especially the worries of recent weeks. […] Bernard's mother is coming to Paris in the next few days and will bring you a few paintings of mine – Bernard will bring you the rest next month' (Merlhès 167).
Thanks to the FF 300 received from Theo for the sale of some ceramics, he can leave for Arles as soon as he has recovered, no doubt 'at the end of the month' (Merlhès 167, 168): 'I'll stay a long time given that the object […] is to make it easier for me to work without money worries till [Theo] has succeeded in getting me launched'. (Merlhès 168, to Schuffenecker).



I



II



III



IV



V



VI

The Van Gogh works that decorated Gauguin's room in Arles:
The *Poet's Garden*:
I. F468 (The Art Institute of Chicago)
II and III: F1465 and F479 (Photos: Wildenstein Institute Archives)
IV: F485 (Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives)
and two versions of *Les Alyscamps*:
V: F486 (Otterlo, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller)
VI: F487 (Photo: Private collection).

Around mid-October
'Gauguin writes that he's sent his trunk and promises to come around the 20th' (Letter 555, 17-18 October).
Gauguin already foresees that he will play an outstanding role in pictorial Symbolism: 'but it is fundamentally in my nature and one must always follow one's temperament. […] For the masses I shall always be an enigma for some I shall be a poet and sooner or later merit finds its reward – […] I tell you I shall do first-class things, I feel it is so and we shall see – You know that in art I'm always right deep-down – […] at the moment, among the artists there's a very noticeable wave of support for me' (Merlhès 172, to Schuffenecker, 16 October).

During October
In Pont-Aven, Sérusier paints, 'under Gauguin's dictation', the *Talisman* or *Landscape in the Bois d'Amour* on a little panel. On his return to Paris, he



The Aven at the bois d'Amour, the motif of Sérusier's *Talisman*.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

shows it to his friends at the *académie* Julian: Maurice Denis (who never met Gauguin but exchanged two letters with him), Henri Gabriel Ibels, Paul Ranson (1864-1909), Ker-Xavier Roussel (1867-1944), Édouard Vuillard (1868-1940) and Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947), 'revealing the aesthetics of Synthetist painting that he had learnt from Gauguin' (cf. M. Denis, in Chassé, 1955, p. 127). The group of Nabis (Hebrew: 'prophet') grew out of this; it had already come into being by January 1889 according to the *Journal* of Maurice Denis (*1884-1904*, 1957, vol. I, p. 73).

Gauguin to Schuffenecker: 'If you see Guillaumin, ask him why he hasn't written. This summer I sent him my portrait and he hasn't said a thing about it. Is he fed up that Van Gogh's gone overboard about me' (Merlhès 172).

21 October, midday
Gauguin leaves Pont-Aven.

21-22 October
'All the same, I can't be sure what my nerves will bear', writes Vincent (Letter 556).

Tuesday 23 October, dawn
After a long train trip, Gauguin arrives in Arles carrying his fencing masks and gloves (Letter 589, 2 May 1889) and Bernard's *Breton Women in the Meadow*, which he had obtained in exchange for an (unspecified) painting of his own. Van Gogh finds the Bernard magnificent (Letter 557; Merlhès 174). 'I arrived in Arles late in the night and waited for dawn in a night café. The landlord looked at me and cried: "You're the friend; I recognise you". […] Neither too early nor too late, I went to wake Vincent. The day was spent moving me in, talking and talking, and walking around admiring the beauties of Arles and the Arlésiennes, for whom I could never work up much enthusiasm. – The day after we set to work' (*Avant et Après*, p. 9).
The same day, Theo sent FF 500 for a work bought by Dupuis (Merlhès LXXXV; Boussod register, in Rewald, *GBA*, 1973, pp. 94-95).
On his arrival, Gauguin asked Schuffenecker to send him two of his pots, in order to 'have a bit of pottery to look at' (Merlhès 174).

24 or 25 October
Vincent writes to Theo Van Gogh: '[Gauguin] is very interesting as a man and I have every confidence that together we shall do masses of things' (Letter 557).

27 October
De Chamaillard (against his father's wishes) marries Louise Lamour in Jersey (Merlhès, 1984, p. 503, notule 5).



Jacob Meijer De Haan, drawing by his student Isaacson.
Photo: Wildenstein Institute Archives.

27 October
Theo Van Gogh returns from Brussels: 'The art movement that has started here seems to be much discussed but also appreciated there & it would be a good thing to set up a permanent exhibition in Brussels too' (Merlhès LXXXVII, to Vincent Van Gogh). On this occasion, Gauguin wrote: 'I hope your little trip was good for the cause that you have so nobly taken up' (Merlhès 175).

Theo writes to Vincent Van Gogh, noting 'from your letter I see that you are ill and that many things are worrying you' (Merlhès LXXXVII).

27 or 28 October
Vincent confirms: 'My brain still feels tired and dried up but I'm better this week than the previous fortnight.- The things Gauguin tells me about the Tropics seem absolutely wonderful. Surely the future of a great renaissance in painting lies there' (Letter 558b). Had he already abandoned hope of the studio in the south?

28 or 29 October
Vincent confides to Theo Van Gogh: 'Yes, I was suddenly horribly worried on your behalf because if Gauguin hadn't had the same ideas I'd have let you in for substantial expenses and nothing would have come of them. But Gauguin is an astonishing fellow, doesn't lose his head and he'll wait here very calmly and working hard till the moment comes for a huge step forward' (Letter 558).

During October
Meijer De Haan and his pupil Isaacson, having recently arrived in Paris in order to study new trends in painting – and perhaps also to escape the rancour of the conservative rabbis whom a De Haan painting had upset – meet Theo, who puts De Haan up **from 28 October** (Merlhès LXXXVII). Deciding to take up painting full time, De Haan had exchanged his place in his parents' factory for an annuity.

Gauguin immediately tells Theo that he would be happy to meet the two

Dutchmen (Merlhès 175); in fact, he met De Haan only in 1889.

Late October or early November
Gauguin writes to Bernard: 'Be a good friend to Laval; he's a fine and noble character despite his glaring faults – when the brute will out… you know there's one in all of us; you have some terrible vices too. We have to put up with them and still somehow support one another' (Merlhès 176).

November
Gauguin: 'From the first month on I saw our common finances taking on the same air of disorder. What was I to do? It was a delicate matter, the money was supplied in modest quantities by his brother, who worked for Goupil, and as regards my share, this was partly in exchange for pictures. I had to speak, and come up against a nature all too easy to offend. So it was only with many precautions and wheedling manners which ran very much against my nature that I brought the question up. It must be said that I succeeded much more easily than I was expecting.
In a box, so much for hygienic nocturnal strolls, so much for tobacco, and another sum for impromptu expenses including the rent. Above all that a paper and pencil to note down honestly what each one took from the pot. In another box the remainder of that sum, divided into four parts for spending on food each week. Our little restaurant was phased out and with the aid of a small gas stove I did the cooking while Vincent bought provisions not far from the house. Once, though, Vincent wanted to make a soup, well, I don't know how he made the mix – probably the way he did with paints, in his pictures – the fact is, it was inedible' (*Avant et après*, pp. 10-11). Van Gogh happily told Theo: 'I have to tell you that he can cook perfectly' (Letter 561). 'We're working a lot and life with the two of us is going very well', he announced in **early November** (Letter 559).

Around 2-6 November
Van Gogh was a perceptive observer of his friend: 'there can be no doubt that we find ourselves in the presence of an untrammelled creature with the instincts of a wild animal. In Gauguin, sex and hot blood outweigh ambition' (Merlhès 177, Gauguin and Van Gogh to Bernard).

In order to pay his Pont-Aven debts, Gauguin sent Bernard the money he had received from Theo. Thanks to Theo, Gauguin was now confident about the future, especially as he felt that he had found in Arles 'the source of a beautiful modern style' (Merlhès 176).
But he was still dreaming of a tropical studio in Martinique, to be founded when he had the money, which would be the centre for a new generation of painters; they would find life less expensive there and could work on new motifs for the 'stupid purchasing public' (Merlhès 177, 178).

Early November
Bernard returns to Paris bearing a number of Gauguin paintings to Theo (Merlhès 165, 167), who confirms receipt of them, noting his own admiration and that of other art-lovers (Merlhès XC, c. 4 November). 'I'm absolutely delighted with the result of my Pont-Aven studies. Degas is going to buy the one of the two Breton women at Les Avins* [Lézaven; cf. no. *279*]. For me, it's as flattering as can be: you know I have the greatest confidence in Degas' judgement', Gauguin told Bernard (Merlhès 178).

First fortnight of the month
Theo for the first time organises a little solo exhibition of Gauguin works, though he did not advertise and there was no critical reaction: 'Two little rooms, in the middle of which a few stoneware pots stood on pedestals, were lined with his paintings' (Rotonchamp, 1906, republ. 1925, p. 49).

Around 9-12 November
Gauguin writes to Bernard: 'You have all the right cards. You have set to work early, you will arrive fully armed, with all the strength of youth on your side, at a time when the path has largely been cleared of its thorns. You are extraordinarily gifted' (Merlhès 178). 'Have you seen the studies that Bernard has brought back from Britany. Gauguin has told me a lot about them. The one he has is simply masterful. I think if you bought one from Bernard you'd be doing him a favour and he really deserves it', Vincent wrote to Theo Van Gogh around 25 November (Letter 558a).

Second week of November
Gauguin tells Bernard that he has finished his best picture of the entire year (the *Vision of the Sermon, 308*; Merlhès 179).

13 November
Theo writes to Gauguin: 'You'll probably be glad to know that your pictures have been a great success […]. For the no. 30 canvases I've used a very handsome white & barewood frame in which they look very good. Degas is so enthusiastic about your works that he's talking to everyone about them' (Merlhès XCIII).
Degas did not in fact buy, but two paintings were sold, and one other sale made conditional on some retouching (Merlhès XCIII). Dupuis bought one on **12 November** for FF 400 (*282*) and one on **13 November** (*227*?) for FF 500 (Boussod register, in Rewald, *GBA*, 1973, p. 91; Huyghe sketchbook, p. 225). Gauguin's dream of a Martinican studio seemed that bit closer… (Merlhès XCVI).
Gauguin asks Schuffenecker to send him some linen and the Degas etchings he has left at Rue Boulard (Merlhès 180).

Van Gogh ultimately refuses to exhibit on the premises of *La Revue indépendante*, 11 Rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin, which had a reputation for openly supporting Neo-Impressionists, not least because the manager, Dujardin, demands a painting from each artist for the privilege (Letter 561; Merlhès, 1989, p. 137, note 1).
And on **13 November** Gauguin informs Schuffenecker: Guillaumin 'tells me that he wants to exhibit at the Indépendants this year. You'd do well to send things too; Bernard Laval Vincent will send things. Signac and co. intend to kick up a stir at the '89 exhibition; we must let them fuss till they fizzle out' (Merlhès, 1989, p. 139).
Gauguin continues: 'Guillaumin has written me a very upsetting letter'; Vincent confirms that 'he seems to be absolutely on his uppers […]. He has a child now' (Letter 563, c. 20-22 November). The child was Guillaumin's daughter Madeleine, born 14 October (Serret-Fabiani, 1971, p. 67).

14 November
Gauguin writes to Theo: 'The excellent Vincent and the shrewish Gauguin are still living happily together and sit down at home to the modest dishes that they cook for themselves. But […] this blessed rain is a terrible nuisance for outdoors and we're doing painting *de chic*' (Merlhès 181; see *317*, inset, on painting *de chic*).

Around mid-November
Van Gogh receives a self-portrait from Laval as part of the series of paintings exchanged; he finds it 'extremely good'. From Bernard he receives a seascape (Letter 562).

Third week of November
Gauguin confesses to Bernard: 'I'm like a fish out of water in Arles, I find everything so small and mean, landscape and people alike. Van Gogh and I have little in common in general, especially in painting' (Merlhès 182). Gauguin settles Tanguy's recent consignment of equipment in cash, and an older debt by giving him a picture. He asks Bernard to send Theo – to reimburse him for FF 50 advanced the previous June – two drawings that Bernard's mother had unwarrantably kept. He hopes she will be appeased by the gift of a pot to her daughter Madeleine (Merlhès 182).

Around 22 November
Gauguin sends Theo a roll of paintings including the retouched Breton canvas and four Arles paintings (Merlhès 183).

Sunday 25 November
Gauguin and Van Gogh may have attended a concert of the Société Philharmonique of Arles, where one of the items on the programme was the march from *Tannhaüser* (Merlhès, 1989, p. 201).
No doubt thanks to Theo, Gauguin is invited to the 6th exhibition of Les XX, due to take place in February 1889: 'For several years the Vingtistes have been inviting Signac Dubois etc. and hadn't even heard of me. […] I received a very flattering letter inviting me for this year and in Brussels I shall organise a serious exhibition to counter the little dot [i.e. the *Pointillists*]' (Merlhès 184).
'I haven't heard a peep out of my wife for 3 months now not a word of news. As soon as I have some money from [Theo] Van Gogh I'll send some. […] family […] I've invested my joys in a lot of other things and all that heat and energy will go into my art instead' (Merlhès, 1989, p. 185).

According to Welsh-Ovcharov (1981, p. 266), an unpublished letter of **25 November** shows that Bernard had no sooner returned to Pont-Aven than he renewed his friendship with Aurier.

Bernard was due to leave early in the month with the Arlésien Zouave Milliet to do his military service in Africa (Letter 558b; Merlhès 176), but finally remained behind in Paris (Merlhès 178).

Late November
La Revue indépendante refuses to exhibit Schuffenecker, who is bitterly disappointed, as is Gauguin, who had urged him to apply (Merlhès 182, 184).

Sunday 2 December
Gauguin, sketchbook (Huyghe) in hand, visits the menagerie of the lion-tamer Pianet, Boulevard des Lices, which was open to the public and later gave a performance every



A Beast from the Pianet Menagerie, drawing by Gauguin, sketchbook, p. 7. Jerusalem, Israel Museum.

evening (Merlhès, 1989, pp. 201-202).
Van Gogh notes that Gauguin is 'married and you might not think so, when it comes to it I'm afraid that he and his wife are absolutely incompatible in point of character but of course he loves his children more and to judge by the portraits they're very good looking' (Merlhès XCVII, to Theo).

4 December
Theo sells a Gauguin painting to the stockbroker Clapisson for FF 400 (Rewald, *GBA*, 1973, p. 91; *275*), and perhaps some pots to a person unknown (Merlhès 187).
In November, Gauguin receives an invitation to exhibit on the premises of *La Revue indépendante*. Like Van Gogh, he refuses, ironically recalling the reservations that Fénéon had expressed about his Martinique works (Merlhès 187).

In the first half of December
Degas buys a Gauguin work for FF 300 (Merlhès 189): 'Degas appreciates Gauguin's work enormously. To the point where he is tempted to go and see them in Arles. "Lucky devils!!", he says, about Vincent and Gauguin, "that's the life!" I don't need to tell you what that means coming from the great Degas who knows life so well in all its diversity', writes Theo to his sister (Merlhès XCIX, 6 November).

8 December
Schuffenecker sees Gauguin's latest works at the Goupil gallery and is enthused: 'The more I think about it, the more convinced I am that you'll knock them all for six, with the exception of Degas. Degas is a colossus, but you're a giant; […] what awaits you in art is not success, it is glory on a par with the Rembrandts and the Delacroix' (Merlhès CI). Gauguin sends this letter to Mette, along with FF 200 (Merlhès 190).

During the third week of December, when constant rainfall is keeping them indoors (cf. Pickvance, 1985, p. 204), Gauguin suddenly asks Schuffenecker to take him in (Merlhès 1989, p. 226), telling Theo that he has to return to Paris: 'Vincent and I are absolutely incapable of living side by side without anxiety because of our incompatible moods and both of us need peace and quiet for our work. He is a man of remarkable intelligence for whom I have great esteem and I regret having to part company with him, but I repeat, we can do no other – I appreciate the great tact you have shown in your behaviour towards me and beg you to excuse my decision' (Merlhès 191).
But Gauguin quickly gave up the idea of leaving, and even went with Van Gogh on a trip to Montpellier – **between 16 and 19 December** – where he again saw the Bruyas collection in the Musée Fabre (Merlhès 192, CIII; *Avant et Après*, pp. 183-184).

From 22 December
Laval will soon return to Paris (Merlhès, 1989, p. 240, Gauguin to Schuffenecker).

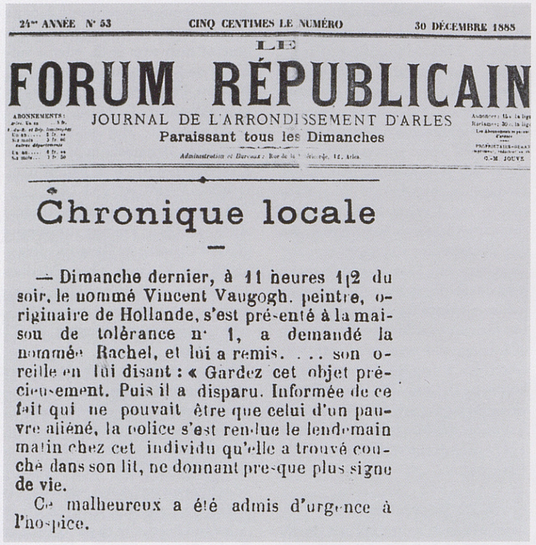
22 December
Gauguin tells Schuffenecker 'I'm in a horrible fix here. I owe [Theo] Van Gogh and Vincent a great deal and



Mette and her children, Copenhagen, 1888. Photo by J. Petersen & Sön. Musée de Tahiti.

despite some disagreements I don't have it in me to resent this good-hearted man who is ill, who is suffering and asking me to stay. […] Anyhow, I'm staying here, but departure will always be latent. […] If I could leave in May with enough money for 18 months in Martinique I should almost be a happy man' (Merlhès, 1989, pp. 238-243).
Did the incident narrated in *Avant et Après* (p. 13) – Vincent throwing a glass of absinthe in Gauguin's face – justify his letter to Theo (Merlhès 191, above, 3rd week of December), or did it, as Gauguin stated in 1903, take place on the **evening of 22 December?**
Whatever the case, 'in the latter part of my stay, Vincent became excessively brusque and noisy then silent', Gauguin noted in *Avant et après* (p. 12). On 22 or 23 January 1889, Vincent wrote to Theo 'there was only one thing on my mind: when he was working he was torn between life in Arles and his desire to go to Paris to further his plans' (Letter 573).

23 December in the evening
Gauguin left the house during dinner; Vincent soon after caught up with him in place Lamartine and threatened him 'an open razor in his hand' (*Avant et après*, p. 13): 'He wanted to kill me', he later told Marie Henry (Chassé, 1921, p. 63).
However, according to Bernard, in a letter to Aurier of 1 January 1889 (sale Nouveau Drouot, 29 March 1985, no. 48), Gauguin told him the story as follows: 'The evening before my departure [Gauguin being about to leave Arles], Vincent ran after me (he was going out it was night time) I turned round because for a while he'd been getting very strange, but I was on my guard. Then he said: You're taciturn, well, I'll be taciturn too. – Since I'd been going to leave Arles, he'd been so strange I hadn't had a moment's calm. He'd even said: Are you leaving? And when I said "yes" he tore a piece out of a newspaper and placed in my hand the sentence: "the murderer fled"'.
In *Avant et Après* (p. 13), he continues the razor episode thus: 'My gaze must have held real power then because he stopped, looked down, then ran back to the house. […] I went like a shot to a good hotel in Arles where […] I took a room and went to bed'.
Van Gogh, back at the yellow house, cut off one of his ears, and, having with



25me ANNÉE N° 53 — CINQ CENTIMES LE NUMÉRO — 30 DÉCEMBRE 1888

LE

FORUM RÉPUBLICAIN

JOURNAL DE L'ARRONDISSEMENT D'ARLES

Paraissant tous les Dimanches

Administration et Bureaux : Boulevard de la République, 14, Arles.

Chronique locale

— Dimanche dernier, à 11 heures 1/2 du soir, le nommé Vincent Vaugogh, peintre, originaire de Hollande, s'est présenté à la maison de tolérance n° 1, a demandé la nommée Rachel, et lui a remis. . . . son oreille en lui disant : « Gardez cet objet précieusement. Puis il a disparu. Informée de ce fait qui ne pouvait être que celui d'un pauvre aliéné, la police s'est rendue le lendemain matin chez cet individu qu'elle a trouvé couché dans son lit, ne donnant presque plus signe de vie.

Ce malheureux a été admis d'urgence à l'hospice.

Local news column of the weekly *Forum républicain*, 30 December 1888 (from Tralbaut, 1969).

great difficulty stemmed the bleeding, went to hand it to one of the prostitutes in a brothel on Rue du Bout-d'Arles (*Forum républicain*, 30 December, quoted in Merlhès, 1989, p. 249).

24 December, morning

Crowds gather in front of the little yellow house. The police superintendent informs Gauguin, who is on the point of fainting, that Van Gogh is dead. Having Gauguin discovers the truth, however, he prefers to avoid





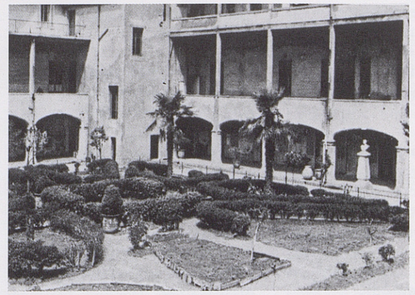
The Police Superintendent as seen by Gauguin, sketchbook, pp. 22-23. Jérusalem, Israel Museum. ['Ah'm the Central Superintendent': 'Do you paint, then?']

a further confrontation. Gauguin then seems to have asked Dr. Rey, the doctor in charge of the municipal hospices, to allow Van Gogh to be hospitalised (Dr. Rey interviewed by Benno J. Stokvis in 'Vincent Van Gogh à Arles', *Gand artistique*, January 1929, p. 4). To Rey's questions about the cause of the crisis, Gauguin replied that it was an argument, 'a question of painting'.

Lucid on awakening, Vincent finds himself abandoned by his friend, and is taken to the hospital, where he immediately suffers a further attack.

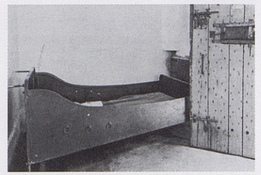
Gauguin informs Theo by telegram that his brother has suffered an 'attack of hot fever' (Merlhès 194).

Travelling overnight, Theo arrives on



Internal courtyard, Arles Hospital, photo A.I.v.G. (from Tralbaut, 1969).

the morning of 25 December at the station, where Gauguin is to meet him.



Van Gogh's room in the Arles Hospital, photo A.I.v.G. (from Tralbaut, 1969).

Theo spends Christmas at Vincent's side, witnessing another very violent attack.

Gauguin and Theo leave Arles together for Paris (cf. Johanna Van Gogh-Bonger, preface to *Vincent Van Gogh. Brieven aan zijn Broeder*, Amsterdam 1914), **on the evening of 25 or shortly after midday on 26 December** (Merlhès, 1989, p. 257).

Gauguin again goes to stay with Schuffenecker, at 29 Rue Boulard (Cooper GAC 34).

28 December, dawn

Gauguin attends the execution of Prado, place de la Roquette (*Avant et Après*, pp. 113-114, and Merlhès, 1989, pp. 211-212).

He is soon after visited by Bernard, who had been informed of the dramatic events in Arles (Bernard to Aurier, 1 January 1889).

27 or 28 December

Further attacks convince the doctors to place Van Gogh in isolation (Merlhès, 1989, p. 257).

Theo is about to become engaged to Johanna, the sister of his friend Andries Bonger, a passionate art-lover (Merlhès, 1989, p. 232).



Prado, murderer of Marie Aguétant, in the Assize Court, detail of a trial sketch by M. Spolski for *Le Monde illustré*.



Andries Bonger (from Tralbaut, 1969).

Around December and until February 1889

Bernard works on a series of zincographs – *Bretonneries* – in parallel with Gauguin, who began his *Lithographic drawings* **in late January 1889** (Cooper GAC 35; Letter 578).

Annexes

Concordance of 1964 and 2001 Catalogues

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W14	20
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W16	25
W17	28
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W30	69
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W58	82
W59	Not catalogued
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W61	See 69 or 70
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W63	80
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W66	Pastel
W67	70
W68	Pastel
W69	Pastel
W70	85
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W113	136
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W185	Not catalogued
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W205	235
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W206bis	236
W207	238
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W210	Later
W211	Not catalogued
W212	147
W213	240
W214	Fan
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W220	Not catalogued
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W223	Fan
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W225	Not catalogued
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W229	Not catalogued
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31. In the Forest, Viroflay – Seine-et-Oise. 1876

67. Ship's Boy. c. 1880

68. Falling Leaves. Autumn 1880

87. Quarry, Overcast Weather. 1882

166. Portrait of a Child. 1885

182. Cliffs, probably near Dieppe. 1885

228. At the Pont-Aven Presbytery. 1886

330. Self-Portrait, Arles. 1888

Unidentified, perhaps unknown works, cited in entries for other works

- 'a new view of the church of Vaugirard': see *69* and *70*
- Second study painted on 11 March 1883: see *99*
- 'a little girl in a black and pink satin Spanish costume': see *112*
- Large picture of flowers, signed and dated 1884 and dedicated, former Haslauer collection: see *145*
- village [of Pont-Aven ...] lit up by the sun [...] a little cow on the right': see. *225* and *228*
- Second number 50 canvas almost finished on 20 February 1888: see *265*
- 'the big Breton with the little boy in blue': see *265*
- Madeleine Bernard on Saint-Nicolas beach: see *305*
- 'a negress': see *317*
- 'a big still life of orange pumpkins and apples and white cloth on yellow fore- and backgrounds': see *321*

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In the catalogue, the titles of certain WORKS and ARTICLES have been given in abbreviated form. These abbreviations always include at least the name of the author and the date of publication, thus allowing the reader to find the full forms in the bibliography.
See also the Abbreviations pages preceding the Catalogue and Chronology.

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